File 13

#11/Fall 1991 $2

JAPANESE PUNK & INDUSTRIAL ISSUE

Sekiri • The Gerogerigegege
Alchemy Records • Public Bath
LOVE REARS ITS UGLY HEAD

File 13

ISSUE #11
OCTOBER 1991

Hey, crew. Just wanted to pass on a quick, heartfelt thank you to all those who wrote in with words of support and encouragement. They made me a little embarrassed, but it's nice to know there's someone out there.

Yeah, life still sucks, basically, and all those stories of rape, incest, wife beating, and child abuse have done a lot to cheer me up, y'know? But 1) I've got a few exciting plans up my sleeve for the future, and 2) I fuckin' hate whiners, so I'll just shut up and welcome you to another gala issue of **File 13.**

And it's the Mason Jones extravaganza this time 'round, as the ol' boy makes my life a whole lot easier by almost single-handedly putting together our Japanese punk and industrial special. We've got interviews with the lovable punk rockers Sekiri, and disturbing noise and performance art from a duo known as the Gerogerigegege. Mason also speaks with Jojo, of Osaka's Alchemy Records, on the state of independent music in Japan, and David and Betsy of Madison's Public Bath tell us of their efforts to bring the noise to this side of the Pacific.

Plus, in addition to our usual pages and pages of columns and reviews, Richards is back with the first **File 13** fiction ever. And I assure you, any resemblance to persons living or dead in his tale of murder and treachery is purely coincidental. But certain aspects of his tale did bring back a few memories in this burnt out cranium—memories of a town called Boston.

*****

cont. on p. 48

Editor: Mark Lo

Staff writers: Lawrence Crane, Steve Davis, DJ Robsquad, Mason Jones, Richards, Manny Theiner

Special support services: Dan and Ed

Everything uncredited by Mark Lo

Thanks: Bryan & Jenn, Mary-Kate, Liz, Janet, Laura, Dan & Lee (hey, how'd Dan get in here twice?), and the participants in our second annual Tri-State Road Rally—Rog & Cathy, John & Colleen, Jeff & Lynda, Rob & Christine.

Extra Thanks: Shauna, Kevin, and the Joneses (no, not the ones that do the Miller beer commercial)

And to Trish for being the only real bright spot this summer...

Back issues $2 each: #4—Survival Research Labs, Fire Party, Too Far; #5—Killdozer, Carl Howard, Alan Jenkins; #6—Hullabaloo, Community 3, Master/Slave Relationship; #7—J.S. Laboratories, China tour diary, life in the psychiatric ward; #8—Re/Search, Electronic Cottage, Green Magnet School; #9—Pain Teens, Zeni Geva, Love Child; #10—Treponem Pal, PGR, Alligator; #11—Do you really need to ask?

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Mark,

Hi--I love **File 13.** (Issue #9 is the one I read.) It's warm and personal, which really makes a difference to me. I also don't want to read neutral commentary. Little glimpses into what people think and feel are exciting. Large glimpses are even better.

I have to disagree with you on one point: You said you felt that there was way too much music out there. Really? To me, the more the better. There's room for myriad expression, self-expression. Anyone who wants to make music should, and it's understandable that they would want other people besides their personal circle to hear it. Music, to me, is sort of people telling stories to other people. I love to hear stories, and I'm curious about all of the music out there. Despite there being tons of music, this isn't going to cause a "good" or "exceptional" musician to sell less copies. Sebadoh cassettes, Dead C singles, Royal Trux 7"s, Tall Dwarfs, Zeni Geva, the Cannanes, Thinking Plague, Dead Moon, Bloodloss, I think all of these are exceptional. I think the more music a person hears, the more open they become, and the more appreciative of the amazing variety of music there is. The ability of people to make themselves know through music is what keeps me with it, despite all the bullshit of hype, scene making, coolness, and attitude.

But you know what was my favorite part of **File 13,** besides the great reviews? The editorial. The comments about male/female relationships, stereotypes, etc. were candid. It made me really happy to hear your point of view and to see things from your eyes. It really made me jump for joy that these issues are addressed at all.

I have a hard time relating to either men or women. On one hand, I also see my women friends spending time and tears on men who treat them like shit, and I see the attitudes of men who, as you say, don't even want to understand women--or, worse, have such a violent hatred of women it's frightening. What I have to remember are the times I have spent time and tears on men who have treated me like shit (whether in intimate relationships or not) before I decided they weren't worth it. It's not easy to identify with other women because, although there's a wall between women and men, there's also a wall between woman and woman to keep them from saying: "We aren't going to waste out energy on men who treat us like shit. Let's spend it on ourselves and each other."

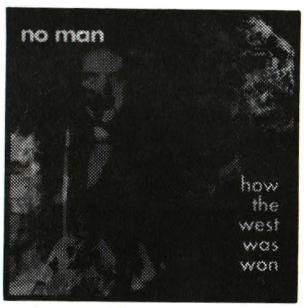
As much as it seems like I'm men-bashing, you have to remember the sheer terror a woman feels every day of her life. You learn not to notice it overtly, but you learn to live with this state of tension. So, as a woman, I cannot just learn to trust men. When I meet a man, I wonder, in the back of my mind, "Who is he? Would he hurt me? Does he look at me as a potential target for his hostility?"

I have to admit I consider myself a feminist, which is a down deep dirty word today. I don't know how many times I've read in Black To Comm that faggots/dykes/vegetarians/feminists are responsible for the death of rock & roll, or in Your Flesh that feminists are puritanical zealots who want to take the fun out of adventurous sex. I mean, whose fun is threatened, anyway?

cont. on p. 54

SMART BOMBS

(a.k.a. SCUDS WITH BRAINS)



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Noise & Filth From The Gerogerigegege

photo: Saori Tsuji

JUNTARO YAMANOUCHI AND JERO 30 OF THE GEROGERIGEGEGE

Infamous in some circles for their noise-porn performances in Japan and their equally noisy, uncategorizable performances, the Gerogerigegege are still relatively obscure in this country. But that's beginning to change. Their latest CD release, Tokyo Anal Dynamite, has sold several thousand copies in Japan and the U.S., and their next releases, Senzuri Power Up and Live Greatest Hits, may well be the necessary catalysts to launch them into the realm of notoriety.

Tokyo Anal Dynamite sports a colorful scatological drawing of a line of folks, um, emitting from both ends, shall we say. Crammed with 75 songs of an approximately equal 30-second length, the CD nearly blasts itself unaided from the stereo. Perhaps slightly akin to the Naked City mini noise bursts, some of the songs are unrecognizable covers of popular tunes like "Boys Don't Cry" and "Satisfaction."

Live, the Gerogerigegege present a noise assault coupled with an obscene visual assault. The singer, Gero 30, screams along with the noise entirely nude, performing acts which in this country would probably relegate the group to red light district dumps.

This interview was conducted via airmail, since the Gerogerigegege have yet to make it to the United States in person.

F13: Mason Jones
JY: Juntaro Yamanouchi

F13: First, the basic questions: Who are the people in the Gerogerigegege, and how long have you been together and performing/recording?

JY: Regular members are me and Gero 30, who is 51 years old, and an exposure maniac/exhibitionist. We used to do obscene performances for a show time at the membership S&M club. In order to appear on the stage at live music clubs, we named our group as the Gerogerigegege. It has been six years since we started with this group name, in 1985.

F13: When did you start doing performances together? What made you want to do them?

JY: Either 1983 or 1984. We met at the S&M club. Ever since we were both dishwashers, we have been very good friends to each other. I was the one who suggested to a club manager to introduce the show. In those days, everything at the club, including the audience, was just drying up. I wanted to do something to change that.

F13: Can you describe some of your early performances at the S&M clubs?

JY: Gero 30 and I have eaten each other's shit and the audience's shit. The audience was watching us eat shit seriously, and we were also serious. There was not any music playing while we were eating shit, and we could even hear their breathing. We started performing at live houses after we started composing music and songs under this name.

F13: Did you start Vis A Vis Audio Arts in order to release your own recordings? How did you begin releasing the LP's by Koji Kita, SBOTHI, Haters, Ramleh, and others?

JY: Vis A Vis started in April 1987 with our first LP, Senzuri Champion. We try to get the idea of as much various music as we can and release the ones that we really love. Vis A Vis has produced CD's of famous and old talent in Japan.

F13: How often do you perform live? How large are your audiences?

JY: We performed six times in 1987, which turned out to be the most frequent. The attendance varies depending on who we play with. Our largest attendance was 600 people.

F13: Are there a lot of places to play in Japan?

JY: If you become famous, you can do it anywhere. We have been performing at many places, some unknown, some large concert halls. Wherever we played, we always did masturbation.

F13: What so your audiences seem to think of your shows? I've been told that audiences in Japan don't react as much as Americans do.

JY: Since we've never performed outside Japan, we don't know about that. But one thing is sure, that the audience who comes to our show gets really hot and high.

F13: Since much of your shows is somewhat obscene, have you ever had any problems with people trying to stop your shows?

JY: No. But when we used a fire at a live house, we got a warning from the police. I want to be caught by the police once. It seems to be cool, like G.G. Allin, doesn't it?

F13: Do you get a lot of support for your recordings in Japan? Do you sell many CD's in Japan, or more in Europe or the U.S.?

JY: Rental CD's and CD stores have become popularized throughout Japan. Since we made a contact with these stores in 1990, Vis A Vis CD's have been offered to the public. Now, more than 1,300 copies of Tokyo Anal Dynamite are available at rental CD stores everywhere in Japan. We have a great popularity, especially in the underground scene. Many people who are not in the underground scene recognize our name, as well. There are many people looking for our 7" EP that was released in 1988. Tokyo Anal Dynamite has the best sales and numbers, with the largest amount being produced of our releases. Now we can make a living only with the profit from these sales.

F13: Do you get a lot of support for your shows?

JY: Our performance varies with each show. It is sometimes a performance, noise music and rock music. Because of the events at each performance, there is also a varied audience each time.

F13: I'm very curious about the independent music scene over there. Some people tell me it's healthy, while some tell me it's not.

JY: I think that it is great. Especially the young musical group; it has a very distinguished character. There are many artists who I really love. The Japanese noise/industrial scene is very positive. Null, Hijo Kaidan, Merzbow, Hanatarash, and we have appeared on so many stages. Especially Kazayuki K. Null has many projects (Null, ANP, Zeni Geva, Geva-Geva, YBO^2...). However, there are some artists who are autistic and stand isolated in Japan. I personally enjoy having a show very much, and if there is any possibility, I am willing to have more.

F13: Have you performed outside Japan? Do you want to, in the future?

JY: No, we haven't. I would like to go to the U.S.A. very much since I have kept in touch with some productions and Suckdog. I also would like to see G.G. Allin. I like very much American home rock artists like Psyclones, Blackhouse, Trance, Warworld, Smersh, Unfilm, the artists of N.T.S...

F13: Tell me about your new releases. I see that one of them is live; how different is your live show from your recorded albums?

JY: Ideas come on and on, without limits. If we realize all the ideas we have, we could release enormous extensive numbers of music. Our new release is a collection of takes that we recorded at a studio in 1985/86, and this is noisier than ever. The live sound is something that listeners could enjoy with putting their own value on, although it doesn't have as much credit as the studio recording sound.

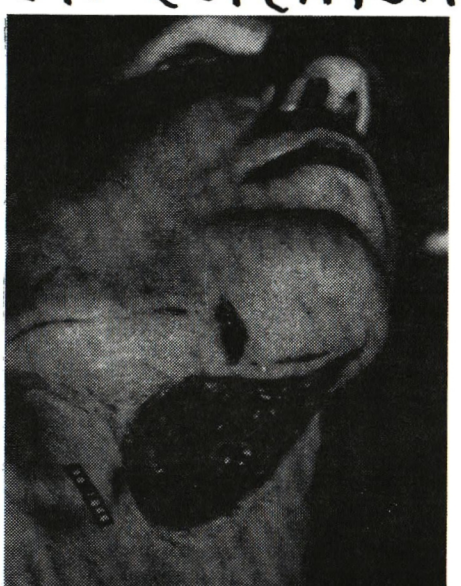
F13: Is there anything else you want to tell people about the Gerogerigegege?

JY: Our first and second LP, and first EP, have been highly appreciated, and they have fetched a high price. I want people to listen to our new sounds that are coming up. We want anyone who is interested in releasing our CD or LP to contact us anytime.

Write to: Vis A Vis Audio Arts, 2-12-3 Hamadayama, Suginama, Tokyo 168, Japan.

THE GEROGERIGEGEGE

tear ceremony



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Sekiri: Darlings Of Osaka

Sekiri may be thought of by some as a Japanese "girl group," but they're certainly no Shonen Knife. Their lyrics deal more with sex and drugs that any cutesier subjects.

Started in 1983, when the members were in junior high school in Kyoto, Sekiri released their first EP in 1985. This has been followed by several albums, and most recently by a CD re-issue of their first LP here in the U.S. by Madison's Public Bath Records.

Sekiri consist of Aya (drums), Kumiko (guitar), Moai (bass), and Miyu (vocals).

The band visited the U.S. in July of 1991 for a few shows and a recording session. They were interviewed by Mason Jones, with help from Elden M, on July 26, 1991, after their first two shows in San Francisco, and before their last appearance. David Public of Public Bath Records provided invaluable translation assistance.

F13: Mason Jones
EM: Elden M.
S: Sekiri

F13: What inspired Sekiri in 1983 to start a band? It's not usually something that teenage girls do.

S: We wanted to stand out, be different. There are a lot of girl bands, but not as young as we were. We just wanted to make music. We all were crazy about music at that time.

F13: Did you listen to a lot of American bands, or Japanese bands?

S: Disorder and English music, especially. Especially Disorder; it's our main inspiration.

F13: Were their albums easy to find?

S: We got tapes. Miyu had a friend in Kyushu, in South Japan, who was getting Discharge and Disorder records from England, and she would tape them and send them to Kyoto, to Miyu.

F13: I see. So they weren't popular bands; they were bands that you happened to come across?

S: We didn't know them at all. We just liked the tapes.

F13: What did your friends think of you when you started the band?

S: We didn't really have any other friends. We were just a group of four that were friends together. In our junior high school, there were no other punks. We were treated as real strange by those people at school.

F13: So did you just start playing for yourselves? How long was it before you played out?

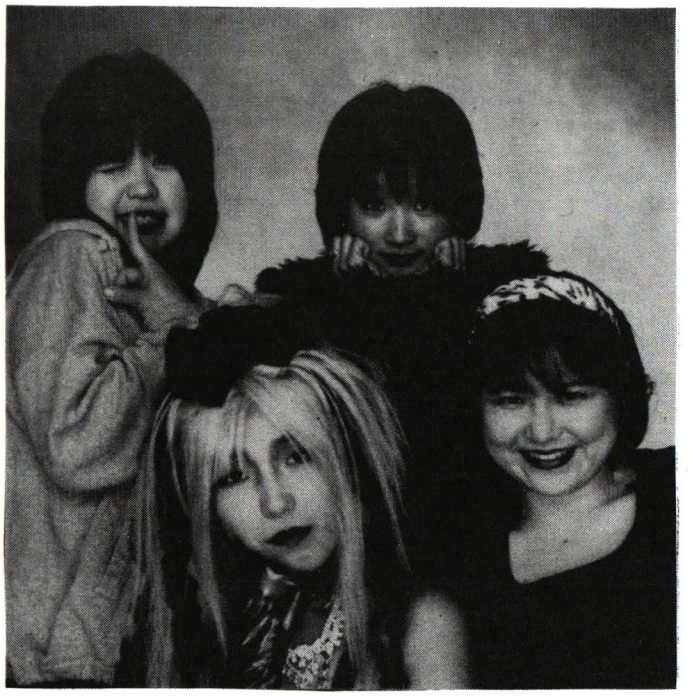
S: About six months.

F13: What did the audience think?

S: It was a festival kind of thing; there were over a hundred people there. Kumiko says somebody was yelling, "Stop, stop," and Aya says that the audience was completely quiet; there was no reaction at all.

F13: That's another question I had. When I talked to K.K. Null, he was saying the Japanese audiences don't respond at all to his shows. He says the American audiences are much more extreme in their reactions. Is that what you think?

S: Well, we can't really compare the two, because we've only done one show here. The Japanese tend to be so shy that they don't want to express their opinions very strongly. This includes applause and things like that. Because we don't really know anything about Americans, we don't really trust the fact that we got a good reaction



SEKIRI

from the crowd. We don't know whether it really means they liked it, or whether it's just that's what they do for every band.

F13: No, if they don't like you, they'll let you know.

S: In Japan, the audiences tend not to applaud between songs. They save their applause for the end, and say, "That was great, that was great." But the Americans are really fast in expressing their applause.

F13: When Null was playing down in San Jose, someone jumped up onto stage and tried to unplug his amplifier.

S: Often, after a show, girls will come running up to us, and they'll say, "That was great. I was moved by your performance." And if you ask them, "Why didn't you express it more during the show," they'll say, "I just couldn't."

F13: Do the men express more during the shows than the women?

S: We have more female fans than male fans.

F13: Is that really unusual for a Japanese band?

S: In general, in Japan, there are more women at shows than men, but Sekiri has an unusually high percentage of strange men coming to the shows—strange older men.

F13: Do you play mostly in the big cities, like Tokyo, Kyoto?

S: Mostly big cities. The main cities are where we focus our attention, but we do play the small, rural districts also.

F13: Do the people in the rural districts like you as much?

S: The character of each city is different, so it's hard to say that it's the fans. Even in Northern Kyushu, there are two cities very close to each other, Kokura and Hakata, and we get a complete different reaction—even though you can go by train between them in an hour or less.

F13: What are the reactions?

S: In Hakata, we get a real noisy, up and dancing, shout-

ing kind of crowd, and in Kokura, people tend to be real quiet. And these are both inside the same prefecture; they're not far apart.

F13: Do the rural areas get as much music exposure?

S: They probably have only two or three shows a year in some of the rural cities.

F13: So did you decide to play in those cities, or was a tour set up?

S: We're a cult. People call us; clubs call us and invite us to play there.

F13: Is that unusual?

S: Other bands are also called, but they decide not to go. There are little local scenes in these cities, so those people do the calling, but it's pretty far out there, and most people don't go.

F13: Which do you like more, playing in the big cities, or the rural areas?

S: Aya and Kumiko say it doesn't really matter to them where they play; it's about the same. Miyu likes to play the cities, and so does Moai; more people in the audience.

F13: Whose decision was it for you to come over here?

S: Mr. Hiroshigei of Alchemy Records and David Public of Public Bath decided that.

F13: Had you been wanting to come over here and just weren't able to?

S: Yes. We weren't able to before, but we wanted to.

EM: You've been here before, on vacation?

S: We've been to New York before, and we've been to Hawaii.

F13: What did you think of New York?

S: Aya and Miyu loved New York. Kumiko did not like New York at all.

F13: Why not?

S: Probably I just don't know how to enjoy New York. It's like a real dark, cold atmosphere in New York.

F13: That's interesting. I've heard sort of the same thing about Tokyo.

S: The people aren't cold and dark; they're just so shy in Tokyo.

F13: David kind of mentioned that to me, too, that Osaka is a lot more friendly. Is it more like San Francisco?

S: San Francisco is more like Osaka; it's dirty. Osaka is dirty and low class. We're from Kyoto. Miyu says it doesn't really matter where you go; all cities are basically the same.

F13: Do you support yourselves just by playing as Sekiri?

S: No. If we start to do it to try to make money, rather than doing it just because it's fun, it won't be us anymore.

F13: How often do you go on tour?

S: One or two times a year. There are several small, mini-tours, where we might only do two or three shows. But five is a typical number for a tour. We'll choose an area of Japan and play five in that area, and go back to Kyoto.

F13: You mentioned that people come up sometimes, and tell you how great you are. Do you get a lot of fan mail?

S: Lots. It's sent to the Alchemy office, and we get a lot.

EM: But do you answer it?

S: No, we don't answer it. We think that the letters we get, those people aren't really expecting an answer. Sometimes we get a letter or a postcard that says, "Next time you come to play in my city, please play this song, and after the show, sign my records." We make a special point of playing that song and being available for signings and things like that.

F13: When you go on tour, do you say with fans, or...?

S: Hotels.

F13: In the U.S., when small bands go on tour, they usually stay with fans, or something like that. Like you are here.

S: It's usually true for most bands in Japan, as well.

F13: Then why don't you?

S: Because Jojo Hiroshigei makes sure we get treated specially. Staying at a person's house like this is in America only.

EM: Are the fans in Japan as rabid as American fans, where you'll be sent gifts through the mail?

S: Moai gets fan presents. She gets toys from fans. She's a toy collector.

F13: Do you do any MTV or videos in Japan?

S: Only once.

F13: Are there any shows like MTV there? Are there any shows like that that are local to Japan?

S: There are MTV-like programs in Japan that do include Japanese bands, but there are no programs that have only Japanese bands. And there is no MTV-only station, so it's an hour or two here and there.

EM: Are there any teen dance shows like American Bandstand, where you would appear live?

S: Yes. Actually, in recent days, there are more shows for amateur bands to appear on than professional bands to appear on live. Late night battle of the bands is a popular program.

F13: When you started the band, what did your parents think?

S: Aya says they were dead-set against it. Kumiko's sort of doing it secretly.

F13: Do any of your parents come to the shows?

S: For Aya and Miyu, yes their parents have come.

F13: Did they like it?

S: Aya says their reaction is that they can't understand what she is doing. Kumiko's father, when he saw them on television, said he wanted her to stop being in such a dark-spirited band. He'd like her to be in a lighter, poppier kind of band.

EM: What are some foreign bands that interest you?

S: Dirty Dozen Brass Band, David Lindley, Cramps, that's about all. Miyu really wants to go see Deee-Lite. Zydeco and Cajun music, New Orleans music.

F13: Anything you want American readers to know?

S: Please think well of us in the future.

For more information on Sekiri, write to Public Bath Records, Box 2134, Madison, WI 53701.

Alchemy Records' Strange Brew

Alchemy Records, the largest independent label in Japan, has released over two dozen LP's and over 30 CD's, as well as number of singles and videos. But more than the quantity, it is the variety of styles represented that is impressive. From the noise of Hijo Kaidan and Merzbow to the punk of Sekiri and SS, from the retro-rock of Subvert Blaze to the Oi of the Genbaku Onanies, there's no predicting what the next Alchemy release will be. The only certainty is that the quality will be high.

Yoshiyuki "Jojo" Hiroshige not only operates Alchemy Records, but also--with his wife Junko and friend T. Mikawa--records and performs as noise group extraordinaire Hijo Kaidan.

In July of 1991, Jojo and Junko traveled to the U.S. with Sekiri, and kindly consented to the following interview after a grueling private noise performance with some friends. Present were Mason Jones and Elden M., with David Public of Public Bath providing much appreciated translation services. Seymour Glass was in and out, since the interview took place in his bedroom.

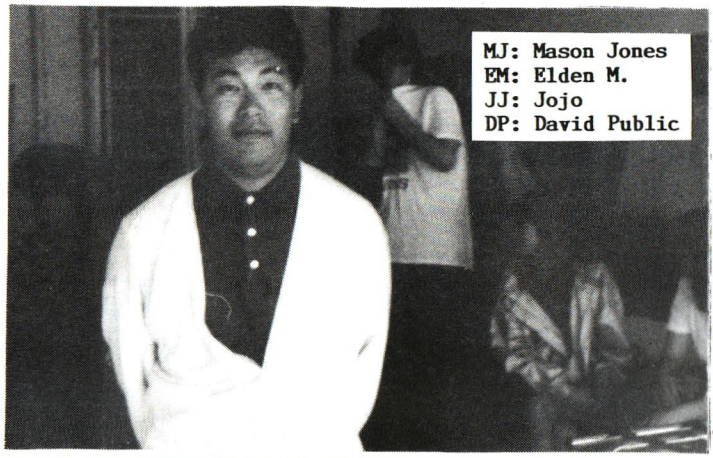


photo: Mason Jones

JOJO HIROSHEGE OF ALCHEMY RECORDS

MJ: Which was first, starting Hijo Kaidan or Alchemy?

JJ: Hijo Kaidan was first, in August 1979. We first played live in November of that year.

MJ: And that was you and Junko?

JJ: No, she wasn't in the band at that time. You can find the early history of Hijo Kaidan mostly written on the Hijo Kaidan Tapes album.

MJ: So, did you start Alchemy to release Hijo Kaidan?

JJ: No, there was kind of an indies boom in Japan around 1984. We'd been doing music since 1979, through Unbalanced Records; Second Damascus is an Unbalanced Record. It seemed, at the time, that most of the indie bands were trying to get onto the majors. We were interested in being a label that was not aiming to be a major, to help bands that were not aiming to be on the majors.

MJ: So, was the first release the Ultra Bide LP?

JJ: Yes, that was the first release. I was the bassist in Ultra Bide. That was in '78, before I did Hijo Kaidan.

EM: What inspired you to start Hijo Kaidan?

JJ: Ultra Bide was basically a rock band that emphasized improvisation at its core. We wanted to stop being a rock band and start being a noise band.

MJ: So did Hijo Kaidan start as some of the same people, besides you?

JJ: No, only me. There was another band, at the time, called Spiral Staircase, Mobasan Kaidan--"kaidan" means "stairs," "Hijo Kaidan" means "Emergency Staircase"--a member of whom also formed Hijo Kaidan with me.

MJ: And were they a noise band also?

JJ: No, kind of a Velvet Underground kind of band.

MJ: Were there many other noise bands around in Japan then?

JJ: I don't think so, no.

EM: What bands were you familiar with outside Japan?

JJ: I didn't really know about any other noise artists. There was a review written of a Hijo Kaidan tape that was compared to L.A.F.M.S.

EM: The Los Angeles Free Music Society; there was a compilation album that had Non on it.

JJ: So we were compared to that it a review. That was the first we really knew about noise music outside of Japan. I think Throbbing Gristle was also making noise around that time, but we didn't have the records, so we didn't hear of them.

MJ: What was the reaction to your first show?

JJ: Everybody was shocked and couldn't understand what was happening. Some people laughed at us, some people got mad at us, some people said it was incredibly interesting.

MJ: What do people say now?

JJ: Everybody knows what noise is now, so it doesn't shock anybody anymore.

EM: When you perform, what other bands perform with you?

JJ: A variety, but we usually don't play with other noise bands. Usually psychedelic bands, or punk bands.

EM: So, what you're getting is basically a conventional audience.

JJ: I think that the people who come to those shows listen to both of those types of music. We used to play a lot with Sekiri, in the early days of Sekiri. People who like Hijo Kaidan also like Sekiri.

EM: What would be the feasibility of having an all-noise show? Would people come?

JJ: If famous bands play, then of course people will come. Dissecting Table, Incapacitants, Solmania, I don't think they could even get 50 people. The famous noise bands are Hijo Kaidan, Merzbow, Hanatarashi. And Hanatarashi don't play live anymore. If it's only Merzbow, not that many people will come. Up to 50 people.

DP: I went to a Merzbow show in Kyoto recently, and only 20 people showed up. With other noise artists.

JJ: If you play outside Tokyo, that's the way it's going to be.

MJ: That was going to be one of my questions. Is the audience for noise music in Japan strictly in the larger cities?

JJ: Of course there are more people in Tokyo than outside, but in the contry you do have noise fans. "Otaku" means kind of a mania person who sits in his room and listens to nothing but noise and doesn't interact with other people very well. So Masonna, which is a new noise artist who's getting a lot of attention, he lives way out in the country, for example--a place where there's almost nothing around, no movies, no nothing.

MJ: Has Hijo Kaidan ever played outside Japan?

JJ: We did a session in Paris. And at the Starlight Furniture Company. (laughs) That's close to Hijo Kaidan. That's about it. Mr. Mikawa has a regular business kind of job, an office job, so he doesn't have the time to take vacations. He really doesn't have time to go overseas and do it. As a unit of Junko and I, we can do that

kind of thing. But a real Hijo Kaidan, including Mikawa, is almost impossible.

EM: Alchemy now is a very successful label. When did you start seeing a good, healthy profit, and that the label was really taking off?

JJ: I don't think it's such a successful label. I put out bands by people I like, sounds I like. That's what the basis of Alchemy is. As a business, it's not really very successful.

MJ: You do make a living from it, though.

JJ: If the meaning of "successful" is that I can live only from Alchemy, then yes, it is successful. If any independent label starts to make money, it stops being independent.

EM: What I meant by "successful" is...You answered the question by saying that you're able to put out what you want, and as long as you continue to do that without folding up, then you're successful.

JJ: I agree with that definition.

EM: It starts becoming unsuccessful when you're forced to put something out for commercial profit.

JJ: I've thought that from the very beginning.

MJ: When were you able to start supporting yourself just from Alchemy?

JJ: Around 1988, I started to be able to live off of Alchemy.

EM: By what album?

JJ: I had put out about 20 different LP's by that time, about 3 CD's--CD's were just coming out. 1989 is when we really began to push and put out more albums. We had enough space in our budget to put them out. And Sekiri sales were very good, so that gave us some extra money to put out other people who would not sell as good. And all the profits are plowed back into the business.

MJ: When you started it, did you expect it to reach this level?

JJ: (laughs) No, not at all. I thought we would put out about four different things and that would be about it. I expected to go bankrupt.

MJ: Are there a lot of indie labels in Japan right now?

JJ: Not many, any more. There are a lot of private releases, where the band itself finances the release of its albums. Other labels are Selfish, a hardcore label; Captain Records, they seem like they're trying to make money on their label. I think that the only indie labels who are really active are Selfish and Alchemy. PSF, High Rise's label, has a little core of sort of noisy psychedelic bands. They put out about ten albums a year. The third High Rise album is going to come out this year on PSF.

EM: In the U.S. and Europe, as far as the noise underground goes, it's very connected with the dissemination of alternative modes of thought, politics, conspiracy theory...Is there the same thing in Japan?

JJ: There's nobody who runs up a banner saying, "We're political," or scientific, or philosophical. Everybody has their own tastes. It's considered, in Japan, to be declasse to identify yourself with a philosophy. If you limit yourself to one image, then you're finished in Japan.

EM: Is there anything equivalent to Re/Search books or the Psychick Youth movement?

JJ: There's a 'zine called Ginsei Club (Silver Star). It's a kind of underground 'zine that introduces foreign noise artists in Japan. Masami Akita (Merzbow) writes articles for that. It doesn't come out very often.

EM: Masami's a good example; his name was taken from Kurt Schwitters.

JJ: But Merzbow is certainly not surrealistic or dadaistic, so he's not really connected to that. He's a pure artist.

EM: So, basically, the music and the noise is mainly entertainment, and it's not necessarily a lifestyle, like here. I think a lot of the appeal of Throbbing Gristle, in the early days, was that there was a whole body of intellectual basis to the music, and it went hand-in-hand with the sounds and the music.

JJ: I'm surprised to hear this. I never thought of it in those terms. I think they're overly analytical. I feel like before they can make music, they have to figure out their analytical, philosophical approach. They probably wanted to do something more pure than what they actually ended up doing. They ended up projecting an image, rather than freely making music and noise. And it turned into a business. And that was also part of the analytical approach. So it turned into selling noise rather than making noise. It was kind of an epic-making approach, but now everybody looks down on them.

EM: It's not revolutionary anymore.

JJ: Maybe. I hate it when I hear Throbbing Gristle today. (laughs) It's really tacky.

EM: A lot of it doesn't hold up today. The reason why I was asking about the connection between music and philosophies and lifestyles is it's easy nowadays, in the U.S. or Europe, to know how a person lives and thinks by the music they listen to. For example, I would think that someone who listens to contemporary noise in the U.S. or Europe, they're into things like body manipulations, conspiracy theory...

JJ: It's abnormal. But it's not that way in Japan.

EM: The only example which seemed normal to me was when I met Masami, and we were into the same things: bondage tattoos. We talked about the same people, like John Duncan, Fakir Musafar...

JJ: A lot of early noise jackets included pictures of dead bodies, body parts, and things like that, and that's why noise got that image. But it's simply a psychological release, a direct expression. I'm really against connecting the two things. I'm trying to make this kind of pure emotional and psychological expression through noise. It doesn't have anything to do with sexuality and these other parts of life.

Lots of people who listen to fairly normal music, like Sekiri, also listen to Hanatarashi or Hijo Kaidan. And I'm perfectly happy to be part of the listening vocabulary of people who listen to many other things, including noise. I'm not really interested in appealing to the audience of people who listen only to noise music and collect abnormal photographs and things like that. I'd like those people to stop listening to noise and try listening to something more normal. (Seymour applauds)

They're making a mistake whenever they think of noise as connected with the abnormal. It'd be more apt for them to listen to heavy metal, punk, or even AOR. I don't want them to limit themselves to noise. I don't want to be associated with that image. Their field of vision is too narrow; I'd like them to broaden it. It's not only the music they listen to, it's their consciousness and their attitudes and sense of common sense. I'd like them to be open.

MJ: That's the nice thing about Alchemy Records, the wide range of things.

JJ: That's one of my reasons for doing the label, so that people who like Oi music like the Genbaku Onanies, or punk music like Sekiri, or noise music like Incapacitants will also hear psychedelic music and each others' genres. And the reason to continue actively doing a label is to broaden people's range of experiences. And if you can't do that, then noise is pathetic. Or you become so abnormal that you can't live in the world, you can't experience good things.

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Public Bath: A Kinder, Cleaner Label

Public Bath Records is a fairly young organization, but within a short time, they've endeared themselves to the ears of the underground with their mission: to make available in the U.S. recordings by Japanese underground bands, such as the Boredoms, Sekiri, Garlic Boys, and others. These have been primarily 7" releases, but more recently, Public Bath has ventured into the digital world, with a CD from girl-punkers Sekiri. David Public and Betsy Bath were interviewed by Mason Jones, via the postal service.

F13: Mason Jones
DP: David Public
BB: Betsy Bath

F13: First, the basics: When did you start PB, and what gave you the urge to do something as masochistic as starting an indie record company? And has it always just been the two of you involved?

BB: Dave decided early in 1990 that he wanted to start a small record label to release music by bands from the Osaka area of Japan. Public Bath Records' first 7"-ers were released in April of that year. At this time, we were both too naive about starting an indie label to realize just how masochistic such a venture was. (Of course, by now we can admit to masochistic tendencies, since we have learned about the biz and unsteady income aspect and still continue with the label!) Once I decided to become involved in more than just a financial way, during the summer of 1990, the label has been run exclusively by the two of us.

F13: Obviously, what makes PB unique is the focus on making Japanese underground bands available to the U.S. audience. How did you become involved with the Japanese scene, and why this decision to make this PB's focus?

BB: We both lived in Japan for six years ago, before returning to the U.S. six years ago, so that I could go to grad school at the U. of Wisconsin, and because we both felt a need to live in our own culture once again. During this first stint in Japan, we never got into the underground music scene. This was partially due to an inability to read Japanese well enough to be able to find out about shows in 'zines with entertainment calendars, and partially due do to not having made any friends in the country who were into this kind of music. We did meet one of the Continental Kids in a bar in Kyoto and found out about a venue for punk shows at Kyoto University, but that was about it.

A couple of years after we returned to the U.S., Dave was re-offered his job as a college English prof in Japan, so he moved back four years ago. After his return, he discovered that there was indeed a healthy Japanese indies scene.

DP: I first began experimenting with Osaka underground music in the spring of 1987. It took a long time to find out which clubs and bands were worth the trouble. It's pretty common for foreigners to show up for one show and then disappear, so it took a wile to make connections, too. But after I discovered Eggplant and Bears in south Osaka (and especially after I rented an efficiency halfway between them) I started to get good information from friends who have been "in the scene" for ages. One good consequence is that I managed to get a pretty good collection if old stuff through swapping, even though I was pretty late on the scene.

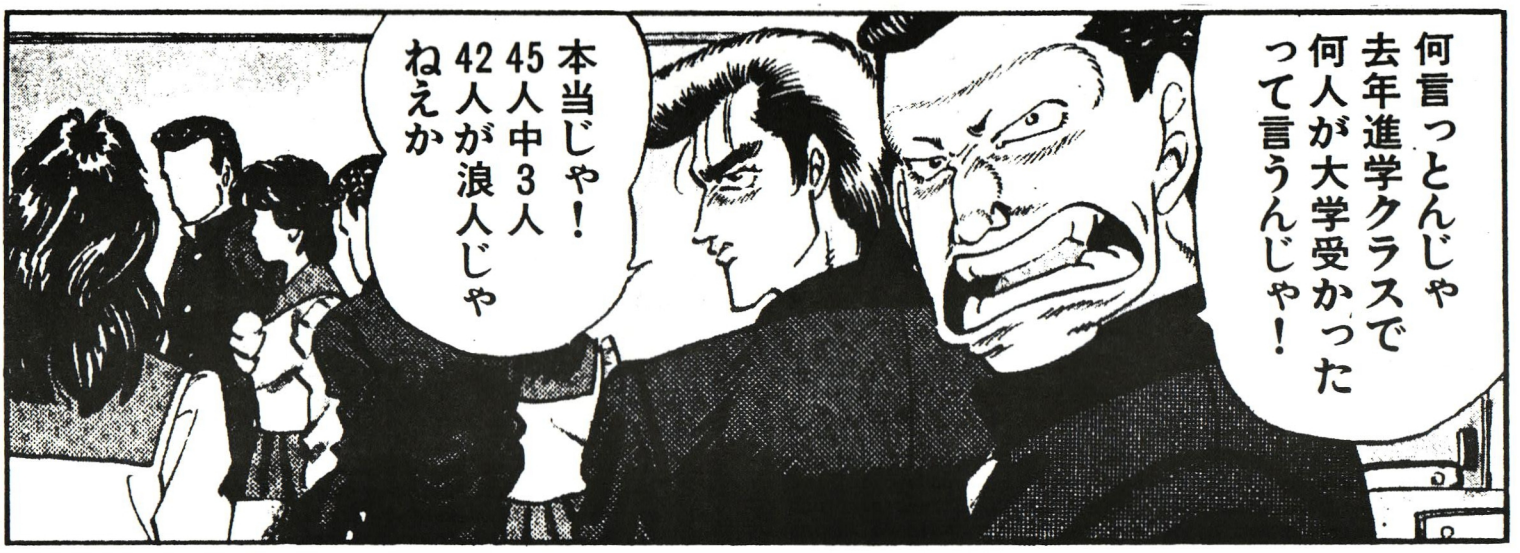
Eggplant was an incredible community. Their main business was renting rehearsal studios, so they were open about 20 hours a day. They had a big lobby with beer and soda machines, video games, music, and always somebody you knew on duty to talk to. In the evenings, they had shows in the biggest studio (capacity about 200-250). They employed and trained great sound people, and had a really generous policy towards bands. It closed Dec. '89—lost lease.

Eggplant was affiliated with Alchemy Records (the Alchemy business group involves record stores, a label, sound/P.A. company, a music video shop, etc.), so I got to know these people pretty well. They were always hanging around, and so was I. I really got into the gang when I won the first Alchemy bowling contest, teamed with a guy from the Folk Tales.

Public Bath was conceived as a way of paying these people back for their hospitality to me, by bringing them the recognition they deserved. Of course, there's more than just Alchemy in Osaka, but that's why I really wanted to do it.

F13: What's your impression of the Japanese underground scene? From what I can tell, it seems to be marvelously healthy, at least in the number of bands.

DP: There often seems to be more bands than fans. Like anywhere, most bands at most places aren't very interesting, but people know where the hip place to play is, and the scene is so concentrated—relatively few people, who see each other regularly at shows—that news travels fast about cool new bands. There's not enough activity to support decent fanzines, though. Most 'zines put out 2-3 issues before dying. But you do get an average of 2-3 worthwhile shows a week. Probably the average audience is only 40-50 people.



There are several small labels, many doing only tapes. Alchemy is Osaka's top, and probably the biggest indie in Japan right now. Other Kansai labels include Bron, which has a very high batting average, with UFO Or Die, Captain Condoms, Nimrod, Dowser, even Audio Sports. Vanilla, in Kyoto, does noise, with Masonna their mainstay. Beast 666 does noise cassettes and comps. Butt Tapes is run by Steve Davis and puts out his friends' stuff. Marubatsu just started with a Seattle-y band called Booby Trap. Tokyo seems pretty inactive right now, but Nux puts out Zeni Geva, Null solo, and other noise. (See **File 13 #9** for an interview with Nux's K.K. Null.)

F13: It's interesting that PB focuses on Japanese bands which are unknown even to fans of Japanese music in the U.S. How have you made contact with these bands? What's their response to having records released in the U.S.?

DP: I just approached bands that I like, tell 'em that we want to release something in the U.S., explain that we can't afford to pay for recording time and want to license something they already made. Most are eager for a chance to reach a wider audience. All of them would love to play in the U.S.

Sekiri are one of the biggest indie bands in Japan. They tour the boonies, and their Sekiri II CD, which I think is easily their worst thing ever, sold about 7,000 copies! Anyway, I just make contact with the bands by going up and talking to them. I see every good show I can.

I'm a professional teacher, so I guess introducing new things it what I like to do. I think Western "rock" is deep in a valley, with no apparent way out. But Japanese bands, even extremely minor bands, are really trying a lot of new things. It cold be called progressive sometimes, which is highly unfashionable, but they mix the soup in different ways. They're usually more proficient players than Western bands are, and this lets them see more possibilities in composing, too. They play a lot of weird rhythms and times, fractured things.

F13: Are you marketing your releases in Japan, as well as in the U.S.? How's the response there?

BB: Our releases are intended primarily for the American and European markets. Though we probably could sell all of each pressing in Japan, we have chosen not to sell many discs there, again, so that we can spread the word about these bands outside of their country. We do pay each band with a certain number of discs and sell approximately 50 or 60 of each pressing of 1000 discs over there. The response in Japan to our label has been very positive. Our 7"-ers with a track or tracks not previously released in Japan are considered collectors' items. Part of this is what we refer to as the "foreign seal of approval" (e.g., Kurosawa was never thought of too highly in Japan until Westerners began to praise his movies). And, naturally, there is a scum bait factor, since so few of our releases their music in the U.S. Discs which have no previously unreleased tracks sell more slowly in Japan.

F13: I've noticed that on the releases I've got from Japanese labels, there seems to be a division made between the Osaka bands and the Tokyo bands. Is this artificial, or is there a definite difference?

DP: You bet there's a difference. Tokyo sucks! Well, it doesn't really suck, but it is a weird media pressure cooker--like the worst parts of New York media self-righteousness combined with the worst parts of Los Angeles media superficiality (or did I get that backwards?).

Osaka is much more a punk town--comparable to Chicago or Detroit. It's a merchants' town historically, with less class discrimination than in most of Japan. Consequently, the people are friendlier, sunnier, and generally just plain sharper than Tokyoites. In Osaka, people are always coming up with crazy ideas fro "super groups" and just go ahead and try it. That's unimaginable in Tokyo, where they would certainly have to practice a lot, coordinate stage costumes, and inform the press before doing anything. I saw a show in Osaka of seven guitarists all improvising simultaneously, just because the club owner wondered what it would sound like. Alchemy even puts out joke CD's. Healthy lack of seriousness in Osaka.

I'd say that Osaka is also more open to foreigners, since they're more open to everything. They're looked down on as hicks by Tokyoites, and an Osaka accent, which is really strong and coarse-sounding (I love it!) is often used to mark a TV character as a redneck, like a Southern accent in the U.S.

F13: Why did you start out with 7" singles? Was it financial, or do you have a particular fondness for them? Why the branching out into CD's now?

BB: We started with 7" singles/EP's initially for financial reasons, but also because we do have a fondness for them. We are both record collectors and concentrate on 7" and 12" singles and EP's. Also, our policy to date of releasing three 7"-ers at one time gives us a chance to expose many bands to Occidental ears, without resorting to a larger, single-disc compilation format. This way, we can release bands which cover various genres/subgenres at one time and let our customers choose which bands they are most interested in. It gives us an opportunity to demonstrate just how diverse the Osaka scene is.

We hadn't initially planned on branching out into CD's as soon as this May's Sekiri disc. However, we were approached by JoJo os Alchemy Records, who asked us to press a CD for him in the U.S. He said that Public Bath could license the out-of-print Take Me To Sekiri record and a couple of extra tracks. In return, we took care of all the pressing and printing. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement, because CD pressing is a bit cheaper in the U.S. than in Japan, so both Alchemy and Public Bath made some profit on the discs pressed for each label. I'm not sure if Public Bath will enter into a similar arrangement with Alchemy in the near future. Nux wants us to release a Zeni Geva or Null CD before too long, and Yamatsuka Eye has asked us to release Hanatarash 4 sometime in the near future. We'll never release exclusively CD's until such time that vinyl dies in the U.S. (as it did six months ago in Japan). Dave and I have gotten

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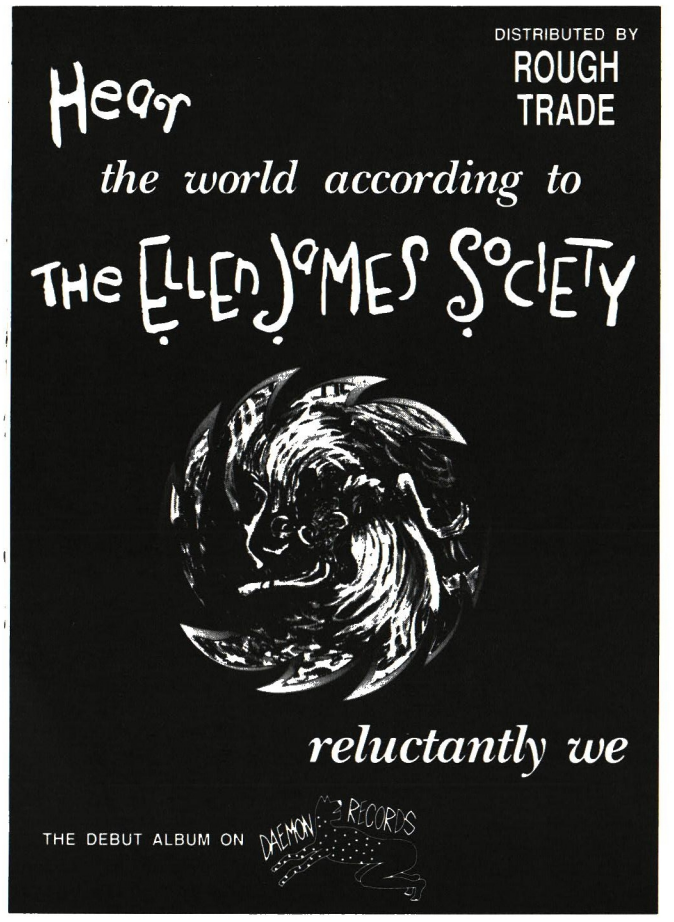

Die, Blofeld! Die! by Richards

Every day of her life, I lost another piece of her. I had to kill her, don't you see?—before there was nothing left.

It's often easy to contemplate killing a loved one. Is there anything more meaningful to give someone than death? However it turns out, you're throwing away more than one future.

And it happens all the time. Guy finds out his wife has been cheating on him, goes home, and shoots her. Or maybe he just pushes her...and she cracks her head against the corner of the kitchen counter. The police catch up to him, either sitting, drinking his beer woodenly, in a neighborhood bar, or hiding out in an abandoned warehouse on the edge of town. He doesn't resist.

My situation was different. First of all, she was across the country, over 2000 miles away, and I wasn't going to "catch her" at anything. Second, she wasn't my wife, and she wasn't my girlfriend. Third, I had no intention of getting caught. I loved her, but not <u>that</u> much.

My murderous impulses were far from heartless. They came from a thoroughly unselfish loyalty to Us, as we had been. Each new town or state she lived in, each new activity she engaged in, each new breath of air she took made our relationship more and more a thing of the past. Just a period of time in our lives when we intercepted each other and exchanged emotions and affections. When we made each other <u>feel</u>.

If she could endure and enjoy life today, what did that say about yesterday? That it was special, or that it was just another layover between cities and exits? Did all of her gifts, and letters, and words, and deeds lose their power, their significance, when each passing day proved that they weren't eternal, that they were <u>then</u> and without influence on <u>now</u>.

But how to do it? Bludgeoning her with a heavy object was out; I didn't want to mar her beauty. Strangling was out; I didn't want her to suffer. Stabbing was no good; too messy. A gunshot would be very loud, and would certainly either mar her beauty, make her suffer, or be messy.

I thought about poisoning her, but I wasn't sure what would peacefully send her to an eternal sleep and what would cause her to turn purple--which would probably have been too troubling. Tickling her to death would have been ideal, but I had no illusions of us getting along that well again.

I didn't want to hurt her. I didn't want to see her... damaged. I just wanted her to be dead, a beautiful, glorious, Sleeping Beauty-type of dead. Her dark hair would be spread out on the pillow behind her lovely neck. Her eyes would be calmly closed--as they were when she was in my arms, as they were when she lay with me, secure in the knowledge that I loved her and would hold her close and kiss her gently on the cheeks and lips whenever she needed me to.

But I guess I wanted more than for her to be dead. I wanted to kill her. That would be my last gift to her, and myself, and most importantly, Us. Because, every day of her life, she was killing Us, and nobody else was going to do anything about it.

Our goodbye was sad, because we cared about each other, but it was also a relief, because we were ruining each other's lives. The pregnancy...well, it hadn't exactly brought us together. It's funny to think that for some people, having a child is a dream come true. God, I hate kids.

So things began to fall apart. And as they ended, as my heart wretchedly cracked and crumbled, it became murder to see her. The smiles, the hugs, were not the same--they were either not as warm, or they were traumatically intense, because we were so painfully unhappy. The subtext of our conversations became far greater than the conversations themselves, Lies were accepted as lies, barbs were all but ignored, and kind gestures were overlooked... because they <u>couldn't</u> have been sincere. It was as ugly

as a relationship could be, and yet we didn't fight, we didn't totally avoid each other, and we still tried futilely to keep things together.

The separation was great, well not "great," but decent at first. I could tell myself that wherever she was, she was thinking of me as often as I was of her.

Every once in a while, a letter would filter in, which I all too quickly answered. The best times were the few days between receiving a letter from her and responding. It was just such a wonderful feeling to know that, for a few days, I was carrying a piece of her around with me, an untouched, uncorrupted piece, which could only be damaged when I wrote back.

But that's not quite true. The best times were those moments of anticipation between receiving the letter and ripping it open. Because it was easy to imagine that, inside, her looping script would beckon me to quit my job, scoop her up, and roam the lands with her evermore. If any dragons came our way, we'd slay them with a touch.

The worst times were those when the reports came straggling in, always unexpected, always undesired. Damn technology, and damn the telephone--which brings far more pain than pleasure, and even the pleasure will always fall short of the only kind that really matters: the physical. One night, there was a call to an old friend, who said cheerily, "Oh, it's like Old Home Day tonight! Guess who just called from Salt Lake City!"

Totally ruined me. I stammered like an idiot. I could barely hang onto the phone. I wanted to sprint to my car, cruise the three hours to his house, and strangle the life out of him. He'd answer the door with a "Hey, isn't this a surprAAAAARRRRRRGGGGGGGGG!!!!!" as I, cackling merrily, sunk my fingers into his throat and shook him until he collapsed. I would kneel over his twitching form, hair hanging in my eyes, body tensed with adrenaline, long after he had stopped struggling, spitting out whispers through clenched teeth: "Die, Blofeld! Die!"

That, you see, was the way Ian Fleming's You Only Live Twice ended. Great moment in James Bond literary history. Fleming, incidentally, would have despised the majority of the Bond films, if he'd lived to see them. His 007 was a cold, unhappy, haunted character, who loved two women in his life and saw both of them die tragically--the latter on their wedding day, at the hand of Ernst Stavro Blofeld.

But most people don't seem to want somber tragedy in their films. You don't have to pay to see that.

I would have throttled him and never been caught. Stone-faced, I would have gotten back in my car and driven home and fallen asleep. I would have woken up the next morning without a trace of guilt. Seriously. He asked for it.

But instead, I said, "Oh, how's she doing?"

It shocked the hell out of me when she called. I was writing a letter one wintry night, many many, months since we'd last spoken. The phone rang and I ambled over to it and picked it up and it was her. Just my name, my name in her voice rolling off her tongue, totally blew me away.

Those cliches come from somewhere, don't they? Heart in the throat is a good one, and it's true. I wish I knew what we'd said to each other on the phone. I probably didn't open up to her, didn't tell her how much I missed her, and loved her, and would have done anything to make up to her everything that had gone wrong. I probably said nothing of any consequence at all.

What if I'd been totally honest? Said, "Don't bother calling me, because I still love you and we can never really be friends until you love me again." What then? Is honesty the best policy, as I'd like so very much to believe? We would have hung up, but would things have been better between us in the long run?

Rare is the week that passes when I don't think about writing that letter or making that phone call. Telling her I love her, and more. But there are reasons I don't. Many of them are poor rationalizations, but one is not. Bringing all of our past up again would hurt her, and it wouldn't do me any good to get my feelings out in the open at so high a cost. Killing her would be easier.

One afternoon, I came home, and there was one of those wretched "some girl called you and didn't leave a message" messages on the board. I was certain it was her. I really make myself ill sometimes.

So I called, and it wasn't her. (Unless she was lying! Yeah! No...) And we chatted somewhat amiably for a little while and then hung up. And I felt as I always feel after, during, and before calling her. Miserable, guilty, alone.

Why is it? Why do two people who were so close, so happy--if only every so often, but for a fairly long time--no longer connect? It's got to be more than just different sentiments about the past and emotions about the present. Doesn't it?

Maybe after we hang up, she'd just like me. Sitting in a chair, or on the floor, or on the baseline of the tennis court across the street, looking at nothing, trying to recall what we said to each other, what we didn't say, and what we "said." Not noticing the television blaring, or the mosquitoes chewing at one's ears, or the cars whizzing by, the occasional occupant yowling merrily, "Hey, look at that idiot sitting on the tennis court!" Maybe.

I loved her so much that nothing else mattered. Literally nothing. If I was with her and the phone rang, I almost never answered it, because I knew who it wasn't. If there was a knock at the door, or a friend needing a favor, or a little child hanging by one pinky above a ravine of ravenous alligators, I couldn't have cared less--when I was with her.

The world could have been breaking up all around us, and my only concern would be to place a foot-sized piece of soil into her path as she walked. It's amazing I came

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Nightcrawlin'

WIMP FACTOR 14/CRAZY ALICE/UNREST
Middle East, Cambridge, MA 6/9/1991

WF 14 took the prize for best set this afternoon, coming off a lot more punk rock than I'd anticipated, but it was amiable Embarrassment-like stuff, plus a few jarring twists and turns. And if you were wondering how they get that train sound on "Train Song," it's by resting a cymbal on top of the snare. Crazy Alice were a band in the Soul Asylum/Husker Du mold. No doubt, they rocked, but all their tunes were very similar and the band failed to keep my attention. The Unrest played barely half an hour. They definitely have a minimalist approach to rock, kinda like Glenn Branca minus about ten guitars. I don't think they blew away anyone in the audience. Definitely better on record. Didn't stay for new Sub Pop signings Love Battery. Seems I always end up going to the Middle East alone, and I'd pretty much had enough for one day.

ROLLINS BAND/BUTTHOLE SURFERS/ICE-T/
NINE INCH NAILS/LIVING COLOUR/JANE'S ADDICTION
Great Woods, Mansfield, MA 8/10/1991

Punk goes big business, as Great Woods was packed, including a large mohawk/blue lipstick contingent, all of whom shelled out $21-$25 for the Lollapalooza. There was one young man, scowl permanently attached to his face, wearing a T-shirt with the stars and stripes displayed prominently upon it. The shirt read, "Try burning this flag, asshole." Yeah, I just might, dickhead. The Rollins Band were far more enjoyable than they were at their Springfield show, thanks in part to the better sound. Instead of a loud, but indistinct rumble, you could hear the stab of Chris Haskett's guitar and the undulating lines of Andrew Weiss's bass. The slow parts were more ponderous than dramatic, however, and the Ol' Man's persona is getting a bit wearing. The Buttholes were pretty tame. They could've been any Texas guitar band, 'cept the singer had a megaphone and fired blank shotgun shells at the crowd. But they were pretty enjoyable, the guitars cranked up to a hypnotic buzz, and Gibby's vocals contorted through some neat effects. Ice-T was the first to get the crowd on their feet, but just when everyone was getting pumped up, the DJ left the stage, the Original Gangsta banner came down. Then this band Body Count grabbed their guitars and thrashed out. I expected stage diving to break out at any minute, So much for any shot at musical diversity. NIN drew enthusiastic response, as they hit pretty hard and also laid down the catchiest beats of the night. The stage show might even have been pretty good—if we could've seen anything from the lawn section. I've never been impressed with Living Colour, but I'd forgotten how many big songs they've had—and how much I dislike most of them. A dull hour, and the cold rain suddenly became a lot more noticeable. Siouxsie & The Banshees cancelled, but Jane's Addiction put in a respectable showing. Unfortunately, drummer Stephen Perkins, who really made the show last time, was all but inaudible. Not a bad day, and we made it out of the parking lot in 15 minutes.

SOME OBNOXIOUS DJ
Bahama Beach Club, Nashua, NH 8/16/1991

Dan is definitely a bad influence on me. Four o'clock on a Friday afternoon, and he's like, "My friend Sue just won a free clambake for 75 people. Wanna go?" So, an hour later, Dan, Ed, and I find ourselves in the midst of a 4-way "office party" competition at the world famous Bahama Beach Club--the type of place that has an all-male revue Wednesday nights, wet T-shirt contests, and other all-American activities. Anyway, "my team," Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center, squeaks out a victory over Brother's Pizza, Nanking (?), and NBS (who have some awesome-looking babes on their team). We kick butt on trivia and beer-drinking, but fare poorly on the stunt-type events (blindfolded male contestant has to grope female teammate, picking off strategically placed clothespins; female player has to work ping-pong ball up pants leg of male player, across his crotch, and down the other leg; etc.). I somehow don't get volunteered for any of these great tests of skill, and I don't get any trivia questions right, either. But I do notice how each team has one female player who is the center of attention. In our case, it's Annette. Ed spends most of the time with a rather loudmouthed chick perched on his lap. Seeing the uncomfortable look on his face, I joke that if he takes her home tonight, I'll lose all respect for him. "So what?" he shoots back. At 8:00, the dance floor opens and my friends hightail it out of there. I spend most of the evening watching our strange social customs -- girls dancing with each other, guys roaming around the periphery and then zooming in for the kill. Our team captain, Larry, being a rather lively guy, drags everyone out onto the floor (except his wife, who sits off in the corner). It's the first time in my life I have the pleasure of dancing to J. Geils. But then the DJ starts playing some pop dance hits (and actually mixes better than the jocks on my last trips to Limelight and the Hub Club). I quickly decide that the only time I'm happy in life is when I'm dancing and drinking. I get to dance with Annette and Ed's friend. So Dan made me go and made me write about it, but $2 for all the steamers and chowder I can eat, five beers, and two or three spins on the dance floor is a pretty good deal.

HATERS
RRRon's Place, Lowell, MA 8/22/1991

I didn't really know what to expect tonight. For all I knew, the Haters might 1) totally trash Ron's apartment, or 2) not show up at all. Instead, it was a rather subdued performance by four hooded men dressed entirely in black. Sure, it was loud, but not painfully so, and the show was mercifully short, at just about half an hour. The set consisted of one long piece, with Arabic sounding tapes and various radios. The two guys with the transistor radios constantly twiddled the volume and frequency controls, while at least one Hater made sawing and scraping noises by rubbing a contact mic over the floor, bannisters, his hand, etc. It was a Dry Lungs I-type din that was grating, but which became somewhat numbing as you got used to it. One by one, the players left the balcony that served as a stage, disappearing into back rooms without a word, leaving a loud, constant static that filled the room for several minutes. I'm not sure if it was great music, or even great anti-music. But when it was over, I thought to myself, gee, that was kind of fun.

MEDICINE BALL/GAS-HUFFER/SUPERCHUNK/MUDHONEY
The Channel, Boston, MA 9/13/1991

It was an O.K. night, and I actually semi-socialized, instead of just pretending I didn't recognize anyone I knew in the crowd. And admission was a mere $6.50. I'm not sure if I've seen Medicine Ball before, but they had some good songs, even though they were quite stiff. Attitude-wise, they reminded me of early Dumptruck, though obviously cut from a different, Sup Pop-like cloth. Gas-Huffer entertained with their brand of deranged rockabilly, the singer dancing around like a loose-limbed chicken, head rolling around, eyes turned upward, and tongue lolling out the side of his mouth. Enjoyable set, though it didn't make me want to run out and buy their album. Superchunk were off their form of the CB's show, but it was a decent set with a couple good new tunes. A fair bit of slamming in the pit during the set. Then, as Mudhoney came out, several stagedivers emerged from out of the packed house. The band rocked and rolled, but I haven't bought one of their records since Superfuzz Bigmuff, and I doubt I will any time soon.

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37 previously unreleased ditties spanning 1982-1990 by Lou Barlow of the seminal band Sebadoh. Folknoise and fun - comes with a hand-colored cover to match the hummpicking songs. 60 min. $4.00

JIVE "Buh-Buh" (SHR04)
Gooey guitar rock sludge dug up from the San Antonio Fault. If Husker Du had signed with K Records, it might have come out sounding something like this. 33 min. $3.00

NOTHING PAINTED BLUE "Logorrhea" (SHR16)
A compilation of live radio shows by Upland's premier literate pop punk band. Hooks, headrushes, yelps and witty handshakes plus a few swinging songs that make my fish lumpy. 40 min. $3.00

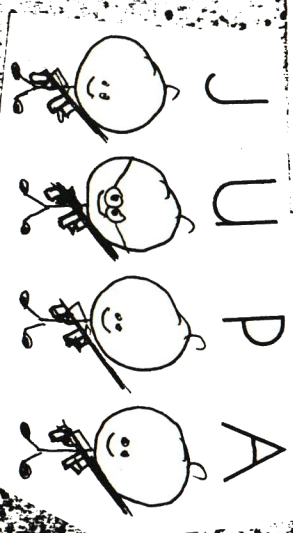
wckr spgt...4-song debut...$3

It was Huygens who also discovered that the cycloid is the tautochrone, or curve of equal descent. Imagine a marble rolling without friction down an inverted cycloid.

nothing painted blue...bellyspeak e.p...$3

First sing it in your normal voice and then higher, in your assumed ventriloquial voice. Then try one line in each voice. This song will give you very good practice with your labial sounds. Don't forget your mirror, but don't rely on it too much. Ask someone to check whether your lips are moving when you are away from your mirror. They may be.

COMING SOON: "Ghost of a Rollercoaster" a 9-song 7-inch 12-gauge from Shrimper, and Refrigerator's opening vinyl salvo, approaching all too soon on Jupa. Love.



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Return Of The Native
by Steve Davis

Well, I've been in America for two months. It's been an interesting experience, as it's been the first extended visit here in three years. Having lived in the oppressive concrete of Osaka, the green of New England was a blessing.

First off, the flight from Osaka to Boston (via NYC) was long--about 14 hours. Save for the bento lunch I had just out of Osaka, the food sucked. There were three movies: The Grifters--sucked, Alice--good, and some other movie I missed.

Spent the fourth of July in North Waterboro, Maine. It was peaceful and quiet. Weather was coolish, but comfortable. Got pissed with Keith on some German booze called "Jaegermeister." Keith went fishing at dawn, lost his fishing tackle, came home, and vomited. I just slept for twelve hours.

After we returned from Maine, I took a geology class, just for fun...sort of.

I also went up to New Hampshire, to a town called Wolfeboro, on Lake Wentworth. It was fun. We all drank Jaegermeister and listened to music. I hated everything people brought, except Pump by Aerosmith. Yanni should go to hell. I lost my key to my locking gas cap and had to break it off.

When I returned to the Boston area, I went to see a show at T.T. The Bears and saw three bands. I saw Miranda Warning, who were good. They even played "Gravitate" for my listening pleasure. Then I saw Japanese Beatles, who rocked, and then I saw the overrated and horrid Blake Babies. T.T.'s was hot and packed, so I went outside and

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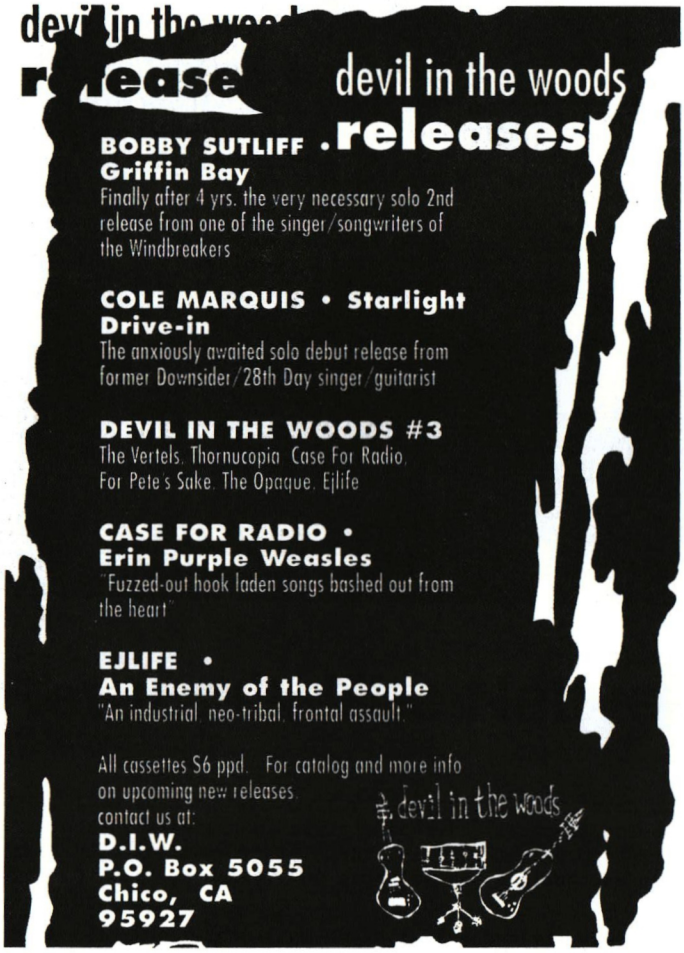
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Shit Happens
by Mason Jones

I was listening to a recent purchase (the new Ice-T CD, one of the few rap albums I own), and it got me to thinking. Which is I good thing, I believe.

And that's the point, really.

There are a number of reasons why I might like a given album or song.

First, I might like it simply because the music itself really grabs me. In a very few cases, I find myself "hearing" what's behind the creation of the music and feeling amazement at the complexity or the simple perfection embodied in it.

Second, I might like what the creator is saying, either musically or, more frequently, lyrically. Usually, this is because I like the point of view or politics of the artist, and I'm happy to see someone bringing a subject to light.

Third, I might not like the message, but it might make me think about some issue. This is the most uncommon situation, because, naturally, I generally avoid music that says something I disagree with. Occasionally, the music is so good that I listen to it anyway, though I'll rarely buy something like this. Even less frequently, I'll have an album with a number of views I agree with, and a few that I don't.

I some ways, this is the most valuable kind of album. It's easy enough to make an album that spouts politically correct rhetoric. How many anti-vivisection songs must one hear, after all? How many fur-wearing people are really going to have their opinions changed by a song?

But that's when my attitude becomes cynical, I guess. Groups like Consolidated mean well, so being critical of them makes me feel bad in some ways. But their attitude is so entirely correct it makes me uneasy somehow. I'd almost rather have a group that is less consistent and careful, because it might appeal to a wider group of people, and make them each think a little bit more.

As it is, I suspect most people who own Consolidated albums listen to them nodding their heads and agreeing with every single word that comes from their speakers. And I feel as though that's no better than not having any opinion at all. Or, maybe it's simply that Consolidated might as well not be espousing any opinions at all.

But, as I said, I feel uncomfortable criticizing them, because at least they are taking a stand and making some opinions known. And I certainly don't want to single them out. There are plenty of other examples.

I started out writing this column with a different topic in mind, though. In my mind, I was comparing the rap of today to the industrial of yesterday. In the late 70's, Throbbing Gristle and Cabaret Voltaire, among others, were using strongly political images in their graphics, and sometimes making equally powerful statements in their music, as well. This slowly faded away and punk's political statements entered the limelight. Rap now appears to be the most politicized music. But I'm concerned, because it seems to have become subject to media attention and control so early that much of its power has already been lost.

When media exposure grabs hold of something like rap, controllers who weren't previously interested find interest very quickly. Hence the major labels snapping up rap artists—but primarily harmless rap artists, who aren't in much danger of offending anyone important. Alternately, there's the Vanilla Ice syndrome, where the labels can create someone ultimately harmless.

What this does is bury the important groups, who are doomed to independent label limbo, beneath a staggering

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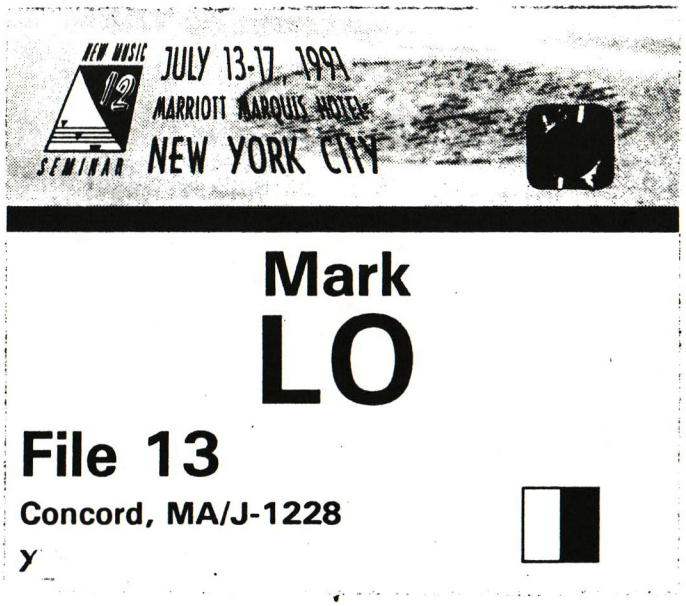
A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Seminar

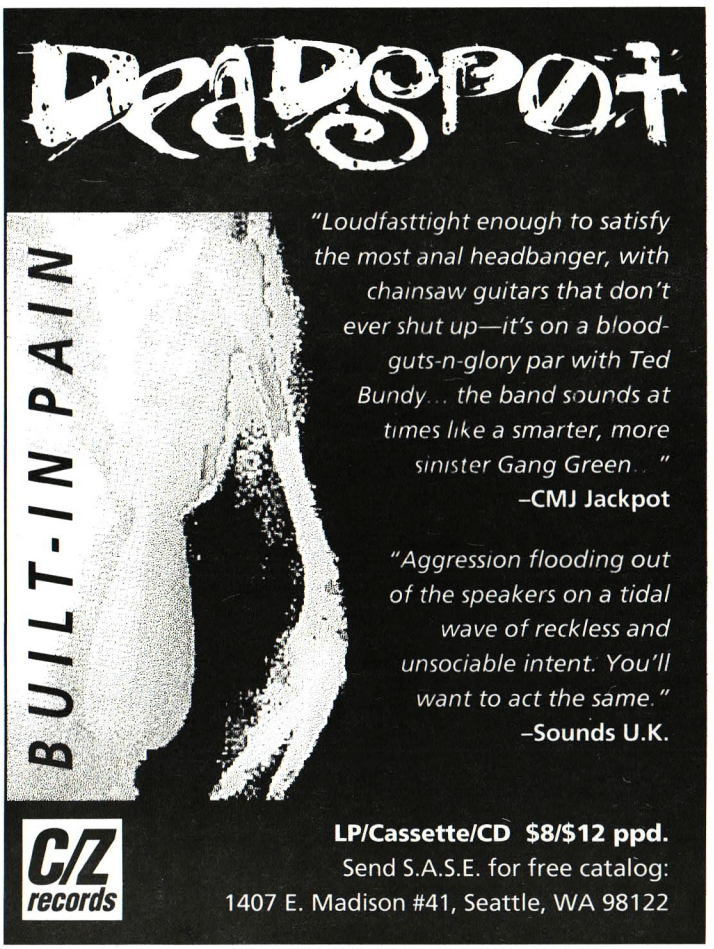


Lots of people complain about the New Music Seminar, saying how big-business and high-fashion it is. Well, this was my very first time down, and I was pleasantly surprised. I didn't meet many new people, or even get much free stuff, but I did get to see some old faces, and I had a pretty good time, overall. Sat in on a few commercial radio panels where they basically admitted that what songs get reported to the trades is more a function of how much pressure they get from labels rather than how many times they play something on the air. But, I was comforted by the fact that most of the jocks and PD's seemed to be genuinely into the music. And I parked my car on the streets of Brooklyn for three nights and it didn't get broken into or ripped off...

7/13/1991—Started out the evening with some great Indian food, which we ate while watching some live sitar and tabla music. The sitar player casually gazed out at pedestrians on the street as he played, or glanced at his watch while keeping the drone going. Somewhat amusing. Kevin and I had planned on seeing Hypnolovewheel at the **Knitting Factory**, but we timed it wrong and wound up catching **GOD'S LITTLE MONKEYS** instead. The U.K. band played guitar pop with female vocals, pleasant, but very forgettable--and made worse by the sweltering heat in the jam-packed club. So we scooped up Kevin's friend Liz downstairs and beat a quick retreat to **Bank** and the **ETON CROP** show. This Dutch outfit sure has changed over the years. I remember their LP Yes, Please Bob as being pretty punk rock, but they discovered the dance bug somewhere along the line and wound up sounding like Jesus Jones. An energetic set, however. Kevin was psyched to see **SONNY SHARROCK** at **Tramps**, but the show was surprisingly tame. Bluesy, jazzy stuff with two able-bodied drummers, and a keyboard player Kevin hated. Sharrock had the guitar licks down alright, but propped up at the bar, it was all I could do to stay awake. So, at past 1:00, after three clubs and three bands, none of which got me too excited, I was ready to sack out. But Liz said **Limelight** was right around the corner, and why didn't we at least check it out. She thoroughly impressed Kev and I by walking right up to the doorthing, waving our passes and dragging the two of us behind--much to the chagrin of the massive crowd which had obviously been out on the sidewalk for quite some time. Inside, it was sardine city, and wicked hot and sweaty, but the DJ was pumping some pretty fierce European techno-house, Quadrophonia and the like. It saved the night. I was instantly rejuvenated, of course, and Kevin was getting down like you wouldn't believe, buckets of perspiration soaking his T-shirt. With our scruffy attire, it was a wonder we made it in at all. Thanks, Liz.

7/14/1991--Skipped the keynote address, but attended a few panels at the Seminar, and headed downtown to catch the premiere of a Daniel Johnston documentary. It was a way cool blend of interview clips and videos, bringing out Daniel's walk on the line between genius and insanity. Sure to make a lifetime fan out of any non-converts. Never did meet up with Kevin, due to the huge crowd at **CBGB** and his hot date with Liz, but the Matador showcase was worth being at, the only unifying thing about the six bands being that the drummer (with the exception of the Unrest) really beat the shit out of their drum kits. I was very surprised to see a band like **TOYS WENT BESERK** On Matador. O.K., but very Siouxsie-like. Didn't think **RAILROAD JERK** were that hot on vinyl, and I wasn't impressed with them live, either--NYC noise meets the Wild West. The **UNSANE** pretty much ruled, total, all-out fury, as if the band were playing for their very lives. **URGE OVERKILL** sucked big time, imitating early 70's glam rockers, with their hideous gold jumpsuits with bellybutton cutouts. Enjoy their studio stuff, but tonight they were very loud and very awful. **SUPERCHUNK** really rocked, pop-like, but super-intense. The way Mac and Jim jumped around with their guitars, I was afraid one of them would end up giving the other a concussion. I enjoyed the **UNREST** more than I did in Boston, though the sets were very similar. Maybe I just knew the tunes better. From behind the stage, I watched Mark and crew put their utmost concentration into what seemed to be very simple parts. But it merely added to the band's charm. Blew $6 on a cab back to Brooklyn.

7/15/1991—Went to an afternoon's worth of panels, ate a lot of hotdogs and booked it back to NH. Yeah, I probably missed a lot of bands and stuff, but some of us have to work for a living, you know?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Yo! File 13 Raps by DJ Robsquad

SON OF BAZERK **photo: Cesar Vera**

I can't believe it. I took a job in the great Midwest. More specifically, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I'll be living in nearby (for the Midwest) Iowa City. This is difficult for me, being a Northeast boy all of my 28 years, the last six of those in Boston. With the unemployment and shitty jobs, though, I just had to go. I was a victim of George Bush long enough.

What this has to do with rap is that I suspect that there is less exposure to rap, except for maybe MTV out there. So I guess that's where you come in. If you're in, or have been in, the Midwest, maybe you could drop me a few hints via Mark and **File 13** on how to keep up, after all this neat cultural overload that I'll be leaving shortly. Considering the lack of response to my last query, I suspect that I'm up shit creek, but what the hell. I'll keep writing "Yo!" as long as I get the access I need.

Oh, and don't forget the Midwestern Survival Guide, starting next issue...

Terminator X & The Valley Of The Jeep Beats (RAL/Columbia)--You know he's a great DJ with Public Enemy, but can he carry an album on his own, working with a bunch of unknown MC's? The answer: sort of. This album basically amounts to a compilation, with the unifying factor being TX as DJ and/or producer. He's not the problem here, it's the fact that some MC's are better than others. The Chuck D track is the best (of course, he's the only other name player here). It's called "Buck Whylin'" and it features a powerful debut from Sister Souljah ("We are at war!"), addresing the problems of black men today. Exciting video, too. Other superior cuts: "Homey Don't Play That," with Bonnie & Clyde; "Juvenile Delinquentz," with Juvenile Delinquintz; "DJ Is The Selector," with Dubmaster; and "No Further," with Section 8, a slow jam along the lines of the Force MD's that works well. The rest of the cuts are average. If you want to check out some new talent, go right ahead.

Ice-T, O.G. Original Gangster (Sire)--Ice goes totally gangsta, and even though I said it was out for '91, we'll make an exception for this one, because it tries to go for the positive message. My only regret is a lack of humor that, for me, helped "The Iceberg" get extra large for '89; there's a little with "First Impression," "Fried Chicken," and Evil E--What About Sex?" Mainly, it's the tough shit that separates Ice-T from everybody else. There really is no better gangsta in all of rap. Starting with "Home Of The Bodybag," which mixes lines from past records with gunfire and sirens, we go on a tour of life in South Central L.A. A good overall picture comes from "New Jack Hustler," from the movie New Jack City (which was great, but George Bush should be forced to watch it, or so Christine thinks). You've got your drug dealer pursuing money, destroying his brothers, and himself. ("Life is weighed on the scales of a triple beam.") That's what I like about his cautionary tales; they show that a life of crime ain't shit. Other excellent cuts: "Bitches 2" (yes, some don't like the use of the word "bitch," but here, a bitch is anyone who fucks you over), "Straight Up Nigga" (about the use of the word "nigga" and Ice expressing his pride in being black), "Midnight" (an update of "6 In The Mornin'" from Rhyme Pays), "Lifestyles Of The Rich And Infamous" (illustrating how life on tour really does suck, but "I wouldn't trade it for a million bucks"), and "The Tower" (a chilling take about prison life, featuring quotes from real-life cons). The final notable cut here is "Body Count," featuring Ice's new hardcore band of the same name. I didn't like it much, but it's great that Ice is breaking out of the rap mold to reach a larger audience. An overwhelming release, and Jam Of The Issue.

3rd Bass, Derelicts Of Dialect (Def Jam/Columbia)--It looks like De La Soul has had a bigger influence than anyone would have figured. 3rd Bass has come up with their own language, a busy mix, humorous asides ("Al's A-B-Ceez," "French Toast," Sea Vessel Soliliquy"), and a hit single dissing Vanilla Wafer. They are now firmly established on the scene, despite the fact that many have been down on them for being white. They've got a lot more soul than some "real" rappers I could name. This feeling is solidified by the appearances of KMD ("Ace In Da Hole," the opposite of the Gas Face), Nice 'N' Smooth ("Microphone Techniques") and Chubb Rock ("Kick 'Em In The Grill"), and strong turntable work from DJ Richie Rich, featured in "Daddy Rich In The Land Of 1210." Elsewhere, "Problem Child" is a continuation of "Product Of The Environment" from Cactus. "No Master Plan, No Master Race" addresses the race problem. No sophomore slump from 3rd Bass!

De La Soul, De La Soul Is Dead (Tommy Boy)--I passed on this one originally, and it seems like everybody else did, too. This album did not surpass the expectations of many, who were expecting another D.A.I.S.Y. Age album. (The band now disavows it as a marketing technique forced upon them.) It's not like they were all peace and love on 3 Feet High, but Dead is somewhat darker. The first single, "Ring Ring Ring (Ha Ha Hey)" addressed the flood of demos and phone calls that followed their success. They have a right to be angry, but we can't have angry pop stars, can we? A companion piece, "Not Over Until The Fat Lady Plays The Demo" takes it to the extreme. The next single was a little more agreeable, "A Roller Skating Jam Named 'Saturdays.'" Other goodies: "Pass The Plugs," "Who Do U Worship?" (brutal, yet hilarious), "Millie Pulled A Pistol On Santa," a real sad tale of child abuse. If you ever need a good dis, see "Bitties In The BK Lounge." De La Soul are just as puzzling, amusing, and impenetrable as ever. It just seems that nobody chose to listen this time.

Kool Moe Dee, Funke Funke Wisdom (Jive/RCA)--Moe's always been steady, but never amazing, and it's more of the same here. When Chuck D and KRS-One drop in on "Rise 'N' Shine," it goes to another level. A bit of the standard brag, sex and the like. "How Cool Can One Blackman Be,"

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One Twenty Twelve

Listening station was down when I went over to Tower to do my last 12" buying trip, so things are looking a little thin this issue, but here goes...

I was hearing a certain tune a lot on the radio, but it took awhile for it to register that it was **Lisa Lisa & Cult Jam**, whom I've never particularly liked. "Let The Beat Hit 'Em" (Columbia) is tops, however, with Nile Rodgers-type guitar, hip-hop rhythms with that great (sampled) cymbal sound, and electric keyboards that have a jazzy, almost vibraphone-like sound. Clivilles/Cole production has a higher degree of sophistication than the C&C singles. The Paradise Garage Mix is more housed up, with a bit of piano, as Lisa floats out her vocals diva-style. So, whaddya know?

"This Beat Is Hot" by **B.G. The Prince Of Rap** (Epic) is yet another hit to come out of Europe (B.G. being an American-born black living in Germany), with sparkling synths and a laidback rap. Catchy, but easygoing house beats make you get up and get into the rhythm, while robust female vocals exclaim the song's title. The Hard 'N' Heavy Mix, as the name implies, has a slammin' hip-hop feel.

Also on the mellow tip is "A Rollerskating Jam Named 'Saturdays'" (Tommy Boy), as **De La Soul** continue their tradition of putting about a million different versions of a song on a 12". But rather than simple remixes, you get a series of laidback groovy jams with different raps, different backing vocals, and different music. Skillful use of 70's pop--including samples of Earth, Wind & Fire, Chic, and Chicago—is an added plus, and the 6:00 A.M. Mix is a perfect way to ease into your morning, Saturday or not.

Yeah, jams just get cooler and more hypnotic, these days. Tempos are down, but the tunes are just as catchy. Such is the case with "Crazy" by **Seal** (Sire), Trevor Horn's latest discovery. I suppose the video got to me first--you must have seen it. The 12" has some gussied up versions that don't add much to the simple beauty of the song.

Sandee's "Love Desire" (Fever/Columbia) is another cool, slinky outing from this former Expose vocalist, with wispy vocals over a seductive house beat. The Revelation Mix sounds like a Latin version of Madonna's "Justify My Love," but a thumbs up to the Inquisition Mix.

"Piece Of My Heart" is just about what **Tara Kemp** takes on her second smash single (Big Beat/Giant). The cool blonde

TARA KEMP **photo: Bernard Belair**

JOMANDA **photo: Dana Gallagher**

delivers some more glossy dance pop, with just enough house flavor to keep me interested. The Live And It Ain't No Jive Mix stands tall, with its male reggae/rap vocal hook, while the B-side mixes are notable mostly for the "hey!" sample from Art Of Noise's "Close To The Edit." Todd Terry tosses up another dud on his mix, as the instrumental cleanses the song of everything that makes it appealing, namely Tara.

But while Terry has been slumping, Steve "Silk" Hurley is hotter than ever, as his remixes give **Jomanda** their hottest single to date. "Got A Love For You" (Big Beat) has a killer double hook in its weaving synths and lilting female vocals, with a super-infectious house beat and a bit o' piano. The non-Hurley mixes are dull in comparison, the Love Mix with a P-Funk synth bass and the Extended Version with a disco-like feel.

Hurley's at it again on "Makin' Happy," the second winning single from **Crystal Waters** (Mercury), giving the tune a jazzy style, chirpy strings, and yet another nonsensical vocal hook. His mixes knock the Basement Boys' attempts right out of the box. Catchy house plus old-fashioned sophistication on this one.

Destined for crossover appeal, if there's any justice in the world, is **Nomad**'s "Something Special" (Rumour/Capitol), the follow-up to the smash "(I Wanna Give You) Devotion." It's a houser with warm, full-bodied female vocals and a bit of a disco-era feel to it. Good assortment of mixes.

It's funny how what comes around goes around--and goes around again. Kraftwerk's "Numbers" got sampled by Afrika Bambaataa on "Planet Rock," and **Coro** does the same trick on "My Fallen Angel" (Cutting/Charisma). Otherwise, this is semi-catchy, lovestruck freestyle with Coro's polished vocals. Not as memorable as any of those old Noel singles, though.

Also influenced by Kraftwerk, but in a housier vein is "We Are Back" by **LFO** (Tommy Boy). This track features space-bound synths and robotic vocoder vocals over a slammin' distorted beat. With a cooler feel is the flip, "LFO," warbling acid synths over a booming bass track. U.K. techno at its best.

cont. on p. 48

'Zines & Things

Cybernetik Renaissance #2—It's been awhile since the debut of CR, due to editor Vyrus' having to finish up college. (Sentences like "Everyone who is doing rock vidios is streaching the relms of rock vidios" say a lot about our system of higher education.) Cassette reviews are often critical, but still give high ratings (over half get a 5 out of 5 for sound). Ints w/ Colorado artists Guns That Own Men and Naram Sin. This issue looks a lot sharper than #1, but this 'zine has a long way to go before it comes anywhere near an ND, or even a Gajoob. ($3, Vi Lewis, 111 E. Drake Rd. #7088, Ft. Collins, CO 80525)

Deprogram--Confusing layout and high degree of sloppiness belie the fact that there's actually some interesting material within. The 'zine contains a first person account of a demonstration against U.S. involvement in Central America (including a thoughtful discussion on the effectiveness of protest), and interview with a dancer on her experiences with plastic surgery (reprinted from Cabaret), and some hard-to-follow commentary on Andrea Sworkin and her views on pornography. There's also a piece on long distance services that reads like an AT&T press release and a few pages taken from religious tracts. Thought-provoking, but unfocused. (?, Box 4542, Seattle, WA 98145)

Dial M For Motherfucker #1—Pointless macho attitude creeps in from time to time—permeates it, some might say —(and if you're going to print pix of porn stars, you should at least get their names right), but I thoroughly enjoyed the ints w/ Happy Flowers and Superchunk. Also included in this messy Xeroxed affair are clippings on Amy Grant, bizarre murders, and sex crimes, taken from various newspapers; live reviews (on Superchunk: "they really need to eat more"); and a fairly eclectic record review section. Definitely an interesting read. ($1+52¢ in stamps, Milton Wayne, 951 Quinton Way, Trenton, NJ 08629)

Dreamtime Village Summer 1991—Miekal & Liz of Xexoxial Endarchy detail their visions for starting up a "permaculture hypermedia" village in rural Wisconsin. The purpose is 1) to create a community which functions as a self-sustaining ecosystem, and 2) to encourage the growth of experimental arts and media. Dreamtime is envisioned as a residential environment, school, and weekend retreat. Anyone interested in getting involved is encouraged to call (608) 258-1305. (c/o Xexoxial Endarchy, 1341 Williamson, Madison, WI 53703)

Electronic Cottage #6—Plenty of food for thought in this issue. Carl Howard and Chris Phinney discuss the effects of rough economic times on the home taper scene; George Kastov interviews the head of the Coalition For Independent Artists, a group fighting for royalties for underground artists; and Murray Reams talks about the sad state of the cassette culture ("The audience has already dwindled, and will probably decrease more...A lot of the music is not worth the tape it's recorded on."). Ints w/bassist L.G. Mair, Illusion Of Safety's Jim O'Rourke, electronic wizard Minoy, and more. ($4, Hal McGee, Box 3637, Apollo Beach, FL 33572)

Factsheet Five #44—Well, folks, it's the end of an era. After nine years, Mike Gunderloy is stepping down as publisher of the 'zine of 'zines. This issue is, like the others, filled to the brim with reviews of publications, music, and the like. Of special note is Bob Grumman's account of his being the curator of a recent mail art show—one in which all the works measured one inch square! Look for Factsheet to resurface by year's end. ($3.50, Hudson Luce, Box 1163, Cincinnati, OH 45201-1163)

Missing Link cassette catalog #3—This catalog offers tapes from labels such as Audiofile, Camaraderie, Poison Plant, Mu, and Violet Glass Oracle, as well as numerous little-known cassette artists. The novel idea is that you can trade in any tape you don't like for a replacement, free of charge. (6920 Roosevelt Way NE #328, Seattle, WA 98115)

My Life Depends On You—Actually the second copy I've gotten, this is Martti Koski's plea for help, after a stay in Canada during which he claims transmitters were planted in his skull by the RCMP for the purpose of controlling his brain. Evidence of similar brain research in the U.S. and Sweden is presented, as well as the projects' subsequent coverups. Chilling stuff, whether you believe it or not. (IRC's?, Martti Koski, Kiilinpellontie 2, 21290 Rusko, Finland)

Mystery Hearsay 1991 catalog—Much more than just a catalog, this booklet details the activities of Mike Honeycutt and pals in print, on tape, in clubs, and on college radio and cable TV. Also available is a handsome portfolio of b&w drawn, photographed, and computer-generated images. (stamps?, Box 240131, Memphis, TN 38124-0131)

ND #14—The small print and lack of margins in this latest issue make it rather intimidating at first, but as always, the interviews make for very stimulating reading. I especially enjoyed Ken Montgomery's look back on his now-defunct Generator gallery/music store and Byron Black's comparison of Asian and American cultures. Also included are pieces on performance artists Carolee Schneemann and Scott Macleod, mail art in the USSR, British group O Yuki Conjugate, and tons of concise music reviews. ($3, Box 4144, Austin, TX 78765)

Reflex vol. 2, iss. 4—Reflex comes across as a safer, blander version of Option, focusing mostly on major-label acts. It covers a fair bit of ground without ever really challenging the reader, Henry Rollins, Aster Aweke, Tackhead, and Inspiral Carpets gracing the pages of this ish. Setting Reflex apart are its series of flexidiscs (Red Kross on this one), a continuing dedication to comics (DC's Frank Miller is featured here), and a large number of female writers. ($4, Box 544, Mt. Morris, IL 61054)

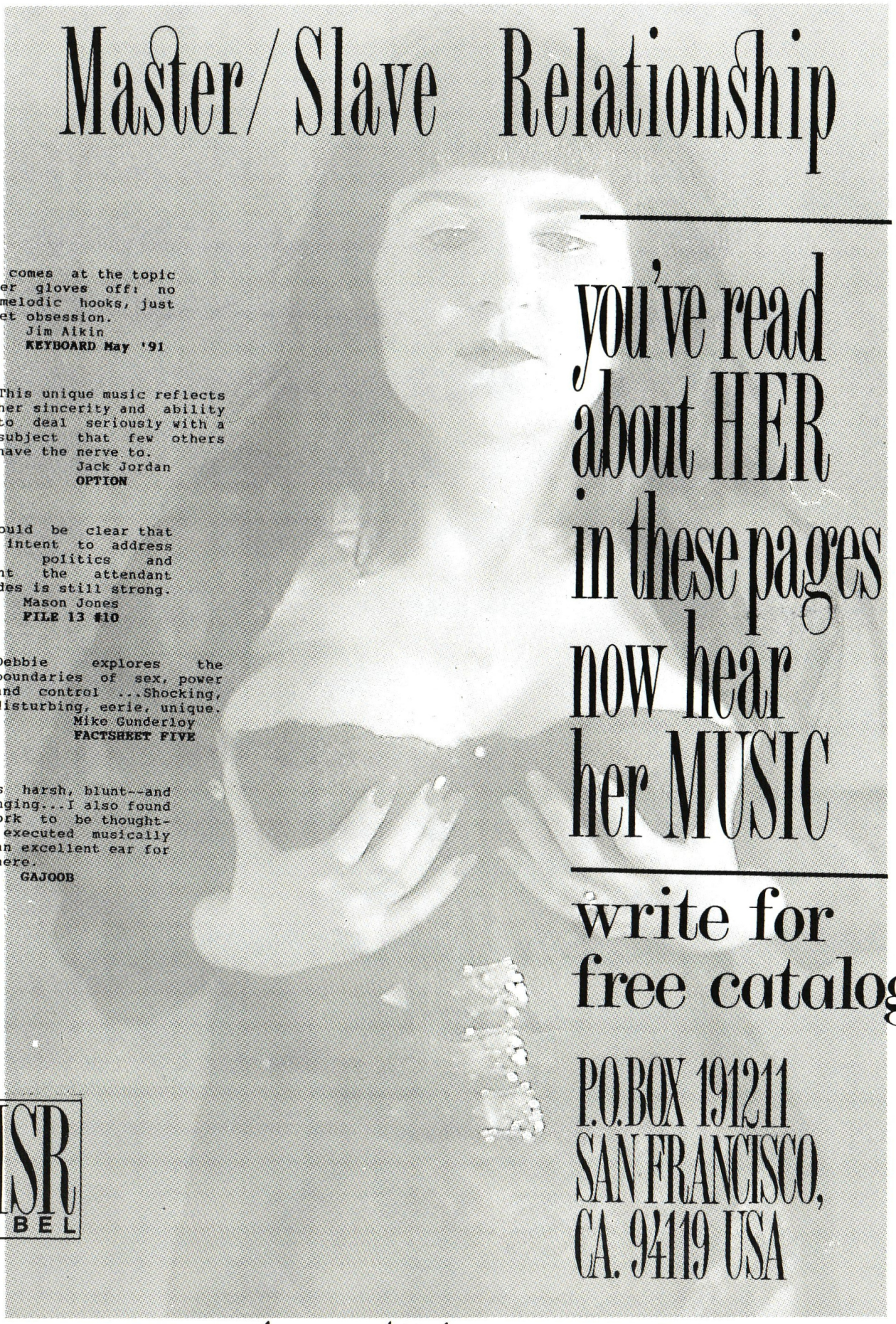
Revue & Corrigee #9—Ambitious French-language quarterly that strays far from the mainstream. The latest includes ints with saxophonist/pianist Albert Marcoeur and third-stream composer Ran Blake. There's also an overview of avant-classical label Edition RZ, and analysis of the filmwork of Maya Deren, contacts, reviews, and more. Pleasing design and layout, as well. (c/o Nota Bene, 58 Rue De Drac, 38000 Grenoble, France)

Rollerderby #3—Quickly becoming my favorite 'zine in the world—no jive. Lisa reveals a lot about the people she interviews, via her totally left-field questions. Put on the spot this time are Tod from Cop Shoot Cop and Christina from Boss Hog (who, I'm sorry, is way more beautiful than Julia Roberts). Even her non-interview with Royal Trux is far more insightful than any analysis most other fanzine editors could come up with. Then there's an expose of Lisa's poor eating habits (bowl upon bowl of cold cereal), a cryptic but well-written story by Bill Callahan (could he be the boyfriend with the big car?), funny cartoons, and (of course) a kinky letters section. I say collect the whole set. ($2.50, Lisa Carver, Box 1491, Dover, NH 03820)

Seven: Scat Records Quarterly #5/6—Double issue, featuring the Puff Tube double 7" reviewed elsewhere. Nice looking mag with many kinds of stock bound together, neat toys, and inserts. Sobering editorial on the prognosis of the 7" (and hence the magazine) and some fascinating detective work on the artist-run St. Valentine Records, but while the art and fiction were interesting to flip through, they didn't quite do it for me. Lots of 7" reviews, a couple of which I actually agreed with. ($8, Box 141161, Cleveland, OH 44114)

Spectrum Music Video 1991 Catalog—Over 140 pages of music videos, from Archie Shepp to Big Daddy Kane, Led Zep,

cont. on p. 50



Jaffe comes at the topic with her gloves off: no cute melodic hooks, just pure wet obsession.
Jim Aikin
KEYBOARD May '91

This unique music reflects her sincerity and ability to deal seriously with a subject that few others have the nerve to.
Jack Jordan
OPTION

It should be clear that M/SR's intent to address sexual politics and confront the attendant attitudes is still strong.
Mason Jones
FILE 13 #10

Debbie explores the boundaries of sex, power and control ...Shocking, disturbing, eerie, unique.
Mike Gunderloy
FACTSHEET FIVE

She is harsh, blunt--and challenging...I also found her work to be thoughtfully executed musically with an excellent ear for atmosphere.
GAJOOB

evil queen bitch or pussycat?

Rounds, Tapes & Found Sounds

******* PICKS OF THE ISSUE *******

EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE
Buddha Bleach (cassette)
(Def Clam)

More unnatural recordings from the Negativland of the Midwest. This time out, we're treated to weird commercials, cool rhythms, strange noises, and fun cut-ups. "Sweetleaf" is a slow, plodding almost-cover that's required listening. "Third Floor" is perhaps my favorite, with very beautiful sounds which create something that could be a soundtrack to a lot of illegal, unnatural acts. "Throw You Landlord Out The Window" is a funny little lesson in physics, though I found the music a bit less developed than on some of the other pieces. I'd say side B contains my favorite tracks, being a bit longer and perhaps more highly evolved. Superb artwork accompanies this, apparently available on a T-shirt, too. Great, unusual stuff, overall. —Mason Jones

LA FUNCION D REPULSA
Funciones Principales (cassette)
(no label)

An extremely interesting release from Mexico, the closest thing I can think of is a more primitive version of My Dad Is Dead with raw guitars and both programmed percussion and live drumming—the latter often sounding like trash can banging. The whole mess is made even more awkward by a muffling echo that blurs the beat and the vocals. Recorded between 1986 and 1990 (but mostly '87), the tracks are stunningly diverse, ranging from the guttural drone of "Les Beaux Oiseaux Noirs" to the genteel but clumsy dance "El Dia De Los Muertos." "En Decadencia" sounds like the Feelies playing with one hand tied behind their backs with Robert Plant on vocals, while "La Repulsa De La Funcion" is hard industrial percussion a la Esplendor Geometrico. "MVA" features distorted guitar harmonics, while "Corte De Bolas" is a quick blast of punk with garbled vocals. "A La Hora De La Comida" is a happy-go-lucky guitar instrumental similar to the first Love Tractor LP. This tape is intriguing throughout.

MORPHIC RESONANCE
Suite 601
(Analog)

Morphic Resonance formed eight years ago in Pittsburgh as the city's only free improvisation group. Influenced by equal parts FMP avant-jazz, academic neo-classical, and industrial power electronics, the original trio of bassoon, bass, and sax/clarinet was captured on a 1985 recording in a two-room office suite. The bass frequencies are so powerful when all three rumble together that the speakers threaten to collapse, but there's plenty of high-pitched whines and shrieks, as well. This is some incredible unholy mega-squonk like the bastard child of AMM and Borbetomagus run rampant through a chamber ensemble rehearsal. The music these heavy cats made was the equal of any of the important avant-garde groups worldwide, and you should definitely hear it. —Manny Theiner

SPONGEHEAD
Legitimate Beef (LP)
(Community 3)

The wonderful second LP by this wacked-out trio (previous one on Shimmy-Disc), this mixes up a ton of elements, creating a meaty meal. Spongehead seem to come out of some avant-rock/post (early) Pere Ubu concept, but feed in social commentary, humor, rants, and grooves to create a pretty fuckin' powerful record. The musician-work is great; the drummer is busy and unpredictable one minute, grooving the next. Somehow, they cover James Blood Ulmer and throw in their funny-as-hell theme song, as well. All on one delicious record! —Lawrence Crane

VENUS BEADS
Incision (cassette)
(Emergo)

Flip-flopped a couple of times on this one. After one listen, I was like, wow, this is great stuff. So I threw it on a second time, all eager and so forth, and basically found getting through most of the first side reminding me of youthful experiences digging holes in the mud at the edge of the brook, so as to reach the clay. But then I got to "Moon Is Red," which reminded me of why I liked the tape in the first place. A solid wall of guitars crashes steadily across the album, taking the sound of, say, Ride, and it's pretty effective. It never quite loses your attention, and when it all of a sudden grabs it, like in the middle of "Precious Little," you're filled with an embarrassed sort of glee. "Then" is an incredible rocker. It's powerful, it's vibrant, it's fun. You heard it here. I've got a lot of hope for these guys. Great name, too. Whatever it means to them, it makes me think of...well, maybe that's just me. —Richards

VENUS BEADS **photo: Phil Rodriquez**

ABORTIVE GASP
Bullfrog (cassette)
(Alternate Media)

More techno-stomp from Germany's Abortive Gasp, recorded during 1989. Cleaner production than some of their earlier material makes the sounds very clear and crisp on this tape. I find myself getting a bit tired of the Front Line Assembly techno bandwagon, but this group does seem to have a bit more personality than most of the Wax Trax ensemble, anyway. If this were on CD and in Tower Records, it would probably sell just as well as Vomito Negro. —Mason Jones

ALMOST HUMAN
No Style Music (cassette)
(IRRE)

The spare melodies and lean, but effective drum beats of this German group remind me of early Common Ailments Of Maturity, minus the nervous energy. "The Family Of Life" has tasteful guitarwork and basslines that effortlessly reel you in. On "Walk On Water," the singer's expressive, if somewhat nasal vocals, as well as the overall echoey glow, bring to mind some of the better China Crisis tunes. This tape is marred by uneven sound quality (which gets worse as it goes on), but the cleaner portions are highly enjoyable.

AMM
Combine And Laminates (LP)
(Pogus)

There seems to be a resurgence of interest in this seminal British experimental group. First, Recommended re-releases their 1986 Elektra album on CD, and now this—a live recording from Chicago in 1984. The music? Well, it's improvised on piano, guitar, and percussion, with as many soft, droney parts as there are clangorous parts. The key is that these guys were doing their thing before the German art-rockers, before the industrial bands, before the NYC improv scene. And though AMM may have had some influence on all those movements, they never quite got the respect they deserved, along with such luminaries as John Cage and Derek Bailey. So here's your chance to discover AMM, even if you don't have a CD player. Kudos to Pogus for putting this together, and I hope that more live sessions will be released in the future. —Manny Theiner

ANARCHY
Blood, Sweat And Mayhem (cassette)
(Rock City)

This Michigan band has a name that sounds political, but songtitles like "Spitting Blood," "Rockaholic," and "Crack Your Skull" say otherwise. The four dudes look like total metalheads, but their better songs, such as "Power Of One" and "Born To Be Scum," are similar to early 80's punk like the Misfits. Contradictions aside, when Anarchy lay down simple straightforward rockers, they fare pretty O.K. But when they try to exhibit any sense of touch, as on "Stand Alone," the results are downright embarrassing, Kent Welhoff's drumming being particularly weak. Why are metallers so desperate to prove they have a sensitive side? Just rock out, dudes.

ANASTASIA SCREAMED
15 Seconds Or 5 Days (CD)
(Roughneck)

The five tracks here have an early 70's hard rock sound, with a bluesy foundation and scratchy vocals. The title track is a hardened, yet mysterious song not unlike early Aerosmith, and "(When I Don't Think) I Can Hang On" and "Tide" could easily remind one of a young Led Zep, singer Chick Graning playing the role of Robert Plant. "Samantha Black" has more of an indie pop feel (my favorite track, actually), while "Buick MacKane" is a dull T-Rex cover. I'm not exactly overwhelmed here, but Anastasia are just a little different from the crowd—not a bad thing to be.

ANCIENTS
The Ancients (cassette)
(Mission)

It isn't every day you get a tape that has to be flipped in order to hear a particular song in its entirety. And it's not like the situation couldn't have been avoided; there's more than 20 minutes left over at the end of the tape. Someone's either really casual, really careless, or really anxious to get reviewed. At any rate, the group is distinctive for other reasons, foremost among them being the dark baritone voice of Frederick Schreck, whose range is in doubt, but whose power to emote--usually in anger--is not. Former Killing Jokester Paul Ferguson turns in some solid work on drums; he and Schreck basically dominate. Keyboards and guitar from a couple of Psychedelic Furs round out the sound, but seem content to keep a low profile. "Release Me" and "Guilt Machine" are pretty good, but "Rain" and "The Promise" (the aforementioned two-parter) go on far too long and expose Shreck's limitations. Likable enough, though. —Richards

AND THE ANIMALS SCREAMED
The Problems Of Philosophy (cassette)
(Dancing In The Deathouse)

We've been suffering through 70's retro, and maybe now it's time for industrial retro. Or, maybe not. But this cassette certainly made me think of some old stuff like early SPK and Cabaret Voltaire, with low-tech rhythms being mixed with tape excerpts, found sounds, and just plain old noise. We're treated to tape cut-ups of Nixon, quotes about death, and similar "industrial" topics, all layered with lots of noises. None of this is particularly accessible; it's for other fans of the oldie golden days of industrial assaults. If you're one of them, then you know what I mean. --Mason Jones

ANOREXIA REMIX
Freeway Mustang (cassette)
(Ignorance Does Exist)

A challenge for the listener, this tape is a nightmare for the critic. Where does one song end and the next begin? What are those one or three pretty good bits on the end of the tape, definitely not mentioned in the liner notes? Did I just hear a piece of Ministry's "Flashback"? Vincent Price's laugh from "Thriller"? Who can tell? On the whole, this tape is a gem, if for no other reason than it commands your attention. Songs like "Remixxx Rock" and "Butterfly Glasses" are pounding rock tunes with a good deal of sampling and other electronics running throughout. Occasionally, things get irritating--in places, vocals reach a high, thin pitch which would have better off left out—but a good sense of humor and a free freezer pop (mine was strawberry) go a long way. —Richards

ANTIC HAY
A Few Cuts In Return (CD)
(Merkin)

Five Virginian dudes treading the alternative rock pond, with great to good results. It's a standard guitar combo with good musical sense (i.e. no pointless guitar wanking and well placed dynamics) and the vocals really make this all work, despite being a bit over-present in the mix. Gary Ziroli has a warm, resonant voice, not unlike Brian from Glass Eye, as well as a pretty good way with lyrics. Sometimes this whole band seems a little bit overdramatic, but on the whole ("Fear Alone" is one of the best songs I've heard lately), this is a good band, and worth hearing (or seeing live). —Lawrence Crane

ANUS THE MENACE
Anus The Menace (LP)
(Flipside)

Group name suggests sophomoric punk rock, but Anus The Menace deliver energetic and intelligent songs about life's frustrations and anxieties. The abrasive steel-wool guitar, hopping basslines, and peppy drumming are closest to a less gloomy My Dad Is Dead, especially when you factor in Mike's vocals, which sound a lot like Mark Edwards'. "Dangle," "Ah, The Irritation Of It All," "Try & Try," "What's The Point," and "It's Such A Beautiful Day" all impress, while "I Wish I Was Gay (So You Would Hate Me)" attacks bigotry in a non-preachy way. Nice job, guys.

APPALACHIAN DEATH RIDE
"Butterfly" & "Dark Horse" b/w "George" (7")
(Lovehammer)

Three dudes from Ohio spilling out some angst-ridden, mid-tempo noisy guitar rock, with some pained wailing and a decent sense of variety, too. "George" is an odd example of "Southern-grunge" rock, like Skynyrd meets Skin Yard, running a single riff into some epic bout of guitar solos and agony. I'd kind of recommend this, but also wait and see if they produce more music--it could be quite fine! (On red vinyl, like your turntable can see.) —Lawrence Crane

JULIEN ASH
Incandescent (CD)
(Permis De Construire)

Magnificent CD of richly orchestral sounds, mostly instrumental, but with a few whispered voices. Dominated by synthesized string sounds, these 20 short pieces fit

nicely into a coherent whole. Deep, sustained synth notes and chords fill the space with a weighty power, while sprinklings of piano and muffled rumblings and grindings provide contrast. Reminiscent of a less agitated Art Zoyd, and definitely worth checking out.

AUTUMNFAIR
Glaciers And Gods (10")
(Independent Project)

A tranquil melancholy wafts off this EP from Thom Furhmann and Val Haller. I guess you could say it fits the Independent Project sound, with coarse, sandpapery guitars and moody, melodic basswork. The dreamy vocals (and the background choral voices on "Novy Mir") give some songs an Abecedarians-type feel, while the clouds of guitar noise/feedback lend "See Only Smiles" an F/i-like atmosphere. Byzantine gold cover art completes this nice, if subdued package.

BABYLAND
1991 (7" EP)
(Flipside)

Yow. And I though electronics this angry-sounding could only come out of Germany. This duo delivers hyperactive industrial fare that uses your eardrums for a punching bag. Catchy and powerful, with rough vocals and an aggressive beat, these songs are highly recommended for fans of Ministry, Front 242, or early D.A.F. But don't let that fool you, Babyland aren't a ripoff of any of those bands. This EP is a definite winner.

BAD EGG SALAD
"Satan Gane" b/w "Broken & Decayed" (7")
(Mullethead)

A minor disappointment after what was a most promising cassette. Bad Egg Salad's overall sound is still suitably dark, and Greg Smart's guitar still has a bit of bite, but both songs here are dull enough to decide maybe you will get up and do that load of laundry, after all.

BASEHEAD
Play With Toys (cassette)
(Emigre)

Some pretty puzzling shit here—like a jazzier T. Rex goes hip-hop, or something. "Better Days," for instance, has laid-back vocals and lackadaisical guitar picking over a whomping beat. It's hard to imagine Basehead Michael Ivey getting worked up over anything. The intro and outro are semi-comedic live takes by "Jethro And The Graham Crackers." Three listens later and I'm still scratching my head.

BATZ WITHOUT FLESH
No Memory (LP)
(N.T.S.)

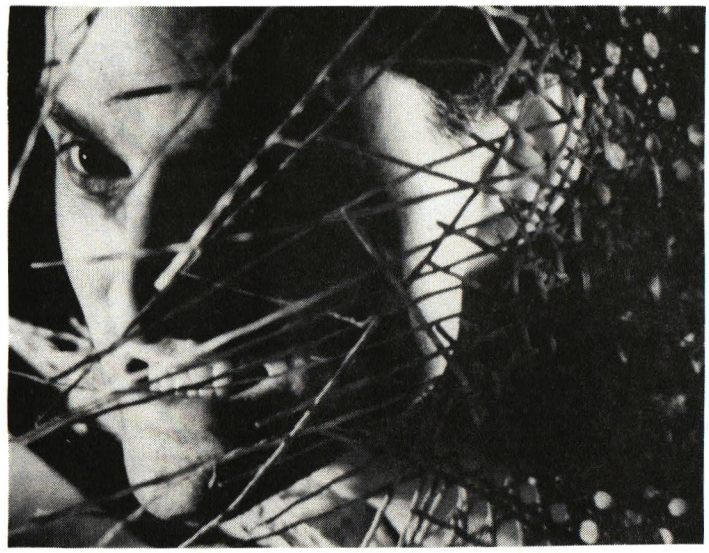
Cheesy-sounding electronic death disco with stupid look-I'm-in-pain vocals and monotonous drum machines. Makes Skinny Puppy look like geniuses. —Lawrence Crane

BLAKE BABIES
Rosy Jack World (CD)

Maybe they just liked the song a lot, or maybe they figured a cover of a well-known song would be a sure bet for airplay. Whatever the reason for covering the Grass Roots' "Temptation Eyes," it resulted in an awful song from an otherwise decent EP. It's not like they can't play it, but dammit, Juliana Hatfield sure can't sing it. Her pathetic, whiny little rasp of "looking through my-my-my soullll" is absolutely unlistenable, and her "there's more bay-bee" is hilarious. But "Downtime," reputedly with vocal contributions from Henry Rollins and Diamanda Galas, is pretty good, as is "Take Me," with both Hatfield and guitarist John Strohm singing. I'm not completely anti-Hatfield on her own—her voice is lovely on the bitter/beautiful "Nirvana." I sure wish they'd thought better of that cover, though. —Richards

BLOWHOLE
Fibrillation (cassette)
(Apraxia)

More tumultuous noise-jazz from this Colorado ensemble. Blowhole's usual mode (as on "Drone Construction" or "Anthem") is that of squalling sax and blaring trumpets above a tumbling bass and drums, with a disarray of tapes, "devices," and "concussion" shoved into every available nook and cranny. But now these guys are almost as likely to give the instruments some breathing space ("Impressions" and "Substance Abuse," for instance, are slow and languid, but still quite dissonant) or even to launch into a hard post-bop romp ("Mur Mur"). Those not initiated may dismiss this as total chaos, but there's definitely a chemistry working here. Invigorating stuff.



MICHAEL J. BOWMAN photo: David Stevenson

MICHAEL J. BOWMAN
Wonderbred World (cassette)
(no label)

Wrapped in a nice color Xerox sleeve with brilliant hues is this tape of lightweight rock with cheesy synths and somewhat geeky vocals—both mixed way out front. But once again, Mr. Bowman wins me over with his songwriting skills, particularly on side one's "The Garbage Tidal Wave," Anywhere With You," and "Smokedrink." These tunes have breezy guitar, nimble basslines, decent drumming, and hooks galore. The instrumental work would benefit greatly from less muddy production, however. A real, live band would help, too.

FRANKLIN BRUNO
Suggestion Box (cassette)
(Shrimper)

Solo tape from this member of Nothing Painted Blue. The clever pop songs done with other musicians (like "My Ex-Girlfriend's Hairdo" and "Bombadiers") definitely please, but a fair bit of the solo guy/guitar stuff (particularly "See It Now") holds my attention, too. If home-grown acoustic strumming isn't your bag, this won't change your mind, but if it is, this is pretty O.K.

BRUTAL TRUTH
Birth Of Ignorance (cassette)
(no label)

These New Yorkers cough up some skull-rattling death metal, complete with vocals that sound like they're being delivered by some huge beast breathing his last. (Especially Scott Lewis on the title track. It's like "huhhuh-huhhuh!" You can't make out a single word.) But I'd place these guys a cut above most of the signed bands in this genre. Lewis drums thrash style, emphasizing the snare rather than a pummeling double bass, Dan Lilker pounds out a weighty bass backdrop for Brent McCarty's guitar to chop through. Tempo changes hold your interest,

while lyrics rail against intolerance and consumerism. This tape's O.K. by me, and that's the brutal truth.

BUZZSAW
Kaiser Guillotine's Ouzo Delerium (cassette)
(Shrimper)

Two cassettes, 70 minutes, of what the catalog says is German poetry spewed out over guitar fuzz, which I guess is an accurate description. Unfortunately, since I don't know German, I'm left with reading the liner notes (which are fairly silly) and listening to someone ranting in a foreign language. The guitar noise is minimal and only occasionally interesting. The result being a couple of tapes which don't intrigue me very much, I'm afraid. It's possible that if I knew German, this would be a more attractive release, but given the liner notes, I'm not sure. --Mason Jones

CANDYFLIP

CANDYFLIP
Madstock... (CD)
(Atlantic)

I didn't care for the first song--too sappy, stirring images of the Pet Shop Boys--and since the second song was "Strawberry Fields," and I'm not too fond of the Beatles or Beatles covers (the Breeders version of "Happiness Is A Warm Gun" notwithstanding), I was none too pleased with the way things were developing. However, I stuck with it, and it proved to be worth it. I can't say that it filled me with love, as the cheery liner notes suggest it should, but while I listened to it, I felt good. Dance without too much beat, energy without too much technical garbage. "See The Light" and the title track were the best, but much of the rest is in the same dreamy vein. --Richards

CHEATER SLICKS
"You Don't Satisfy" b/w "My Little Red Book" (7")
(Sympathy For The Records Industry)

Nice cover art and all, but this yellow 7" contains two murky garage rockers that should never have seen the light of day. Production might have something to do with the single's failure, but the A-side sticks to a shopworn formula, while the flip is a needless cover. Boston's Cheater Slicks are plagued by hapless vocals and monotonous guitar licks. Their engine's revving high, but the transmission's hopelessly stuck in neutral. Bleah.

CHECKMATES
The Checkmates (cassette)
(Remix)

It's all very confusing, but the Checkmates used to be called Anorexia Remix, which apparently was/is the alter ego reserved for the poppier side of Abortive Gasp. Whatever the case, this trio is on the industrial dance tip, but avoids much of the Wax Trax predictability. A few tracks are kind of lightweight, with a wimpy beat, but "Clouds" has infectious clanking rhythms along with buzzing noise, "Freeway Mustang" sounds like turbo-charged Kraftwerk, and "Blasting The Party At 99 Transformer Speed" has a nice, hard hip-hop beat. This tape is uneven, perhaps, but the good moments seem to outweigh the less interesting ones.

CHEER ACCIDENT
Dumb Ask (CD)
(Complacency)

I'm pretty tired of writing reviews right now, so let me just say I like this disc a whole lot better than I'm probably letting on. The Chicago trio recorded this back in '89 with engineering help from Steve somebody or other, coming out of the studio with something more jarring and more stripped down than Sever Roots, Tree Dies. This recording has a savage bass sound, grinding guitars, pounding drums, and straining vocals; no piano, flute, trumpet, or samples adorn these tunes. Listening to Dumb Ask lurches your neck around like one of those dratted amusement park rides. "Filet Of Nod," in particular, has the crunch of a Zeni Geva or a less grungy Godflesh, slamming your skull against the wall repeatedly for over eight minutes. Good stuff.

CHEMICAL PEOPLE
Angels 'N' Devils (CD)
(Cruz)

After I got through these six songs the first time, I figured they must have been leftovers from The Right Thing. That's not the case, but our happy trio seem downright uninspired this time out. "Ask The Angels," "Been Here," and "Faust" are all melodic punk/pop tunes, but stripped of the band's usual intensity. Then we have a lackluster metal/rap tune ("The Rap"), and a couple of real fillers in "Blo Me Fatti" and the brief, acoustic "1490." These guys have done a lot better.

CODEINE
"Pickup Song" b/w "3 Angels" (7")
(Glitterhouse)

While many indie rock groups go for thick slabs of churning guitar noise, this NYC band achieves a massive, yet majestic sound. Both tunes have drowsy vocals and drumming, languid guitar lines and bass that sounds like it may be e-bowed. Yeah, this single has a slow, lethargic beauty--like Greg Sage on Quaaludes. Go for it.

KEVIN COYNE
Peel Sessions (CD)
(Strange Fruit/Dutch East India)

Heard of Kevin Coyne? Probably not, and that alone makes him a better candidate for a Peel Sessions comp than, say, Siouxsie. The music is not at all my cup of tea, being that which attracts PC yuppies like flies--folky, bluesy, arty singer/songwriter stuff (see dictionary of rock under R. Hitchcock, A. Partridge, E. Costello, etc.). But I did notice some deteriorating trends in the music--the newer sessions were overproduced in a Tracy Chapman mersh-folk style, as compared to the older, blues-oriented material. One song I unexpectedly enjoyed, "Dance Of The Bourgeoisie," was some decent, Copernicus-like spoken rambling over free-ish jazz. Go figure. --Manny Theiner

CRASH WORSHIP-ADRV
"Pillar Of Fire" & "Astala Nouf" (12")
(Alamut)

This is one of the more curious and original things I've been sent to review. A two-song, one-sided 12" vinyl thing with an etching of a drummer and other strange things on the other side, and encased in a screen-printed sleeve (not unlike an IPR release). The music is interesting, many drums and percussion topped with strange vox, drones, bagpipes, and more--very primal-sounding and hyp-

notic in a frightening way. Word has it that crowds at their shows go crazy, dancing and even getting naked and fornicating! Wow. --Lawrence Crane

CRASHBLACK BIG ORANGE

CRASHBLACK BIG ORANGE
Naked Man (LP)
(Cold Grey Matter)

I haven't really been into this kind of Gothic stuff in a while, but Naked Man is nicely done, especially the first side. CBO have biting guitars from John William, drifting female vocals from Mary Simmons, and a big, echoey sound overall. Simmon's bass seems to have a life of its own, used far more than just a mechanism to anchor the sound, and tasteful drum programs (as on "Rythms") have a natural, organic sound. The edgey sound of "Trust" is close (a bit too close) to Siouxsie & The Banshees, while the more atmospheric "Existence" is closer to Xmal Deutschland. I don't know if the songs are weaker on side two, or if I tend to be saturated by the time I get there, but I let those tunes pretty much drift by. The addition of drummer Rick Carlson should only add another dimension to the band's sound.

DAMBUILDERS
"Yo Mama Fish" b/w "Pop Song=Food" (7")
(Puppethead)

The first thing that strikes me about this 45 is the way it lacks the real drive the Dambuilders exhibit live. In fact, their Hawaiian origins, bright pop feel, and female violin player make it tempting to compare these guys to Poi Dog Pondering. But the solid, melodic bass and expressive vocals serve to elevate these tunes just a little higher. And "Pop Song=Food" has run through my head on more than one occasion. If the 'Builders could let it fly a little more (and if bandleader Derby would stop calling me "Mike"), I'd be pretty grateful.

DECEPTION BAY
Fortune Days (10")
(Independent Project)

The darkest and murkiest of all Independent Project bands, Deception Bay make a bunch of early recordings (1984-5) available on this 10". The packaging is cool black printing on black tissue paper, but musically, Fortune Days is too aloof to really cut the mustard.

DECEPTION BAY
My Color Flag (LP)
(Independent Project)

The second LP from this extraordinarily low profile Boston band, My Color Flag is a long way above Fortune Days, with a greater incisiveness and more sonorous production. Compare the lackluster title track from the 10" with the version here, where The Joy Division-like guitar sound and writhing bassline really stand out. The extra kick of Terry Donahue's drums lends it a degree of urgency previously lacking. "On My Side" and "Getting Scared" wreath vocals intoned in a low, Gothic voice with a light haze of buzzing guitar feedback. Worthy stuff for gloom lovers, and a smart black-on-silver cover, too.

DOLOMITE
Venus (7" EP)
(Fiasco)

It's another Chicago/Albini production. "Tarantula" is a slow, ominous tune, with stifled vocals and guitars that have you looking over your shoulder, but which never do attack. Bryan Aldrin's drums get "My Crime" to pick up the pace a little, while the drawled vocals suggest a sleepy J. Mascis. "Sloppy 70's Woodstock Titties" is a manly, Killdozer-like brew. While Dolomite promise a lot and deliver little, I'm not counting them out just yet.

DOSE
"Singleton" b/w "Sparrow Song"
(C/Z)

This Oregon band has a ballsy Northwestern guitar sound, the A-side being loud and boisterous, and the flip being a little spacier. Unfortunately, both tunes are rather ho-hum, failing to register at all on my response-o-meter. Oh, well.

DROWNING BREATHING
Delicate Bliss Or Languor (cassette)
(Scary Music)

Perhaps a transitional release from one of my favorite cassette artists. Foggy, atmospheric dirges are the Drowning Breathing's forte, but rather than just drone on (which would be fine by me), they possess a more musical feel, like a Pauline Oliveros or Stuart Dempster. I'm not sure the exact instrumentation, but the cassette's opening piece has timpani on brass sounds—very sparse, very somber--which linger in the air. What's new is the beat box, which makes its presence felt on three tunes, including the standout "Oh Dear Oh Dear," a subtle work with soft piano lines. And there are even some vocals. "Fear Becomes Expressionless" has a weighty, psalm-like feel, while "Plant Pennies In A Lover's Grave" has vocals that struggle for recognition beneath the mix, along with a light, airy synth and beat.

GEOFF DUGAN
The Aluminum Hallway (cassette)
(no label)

Well done tape of sparse percussion and weird reverberations, where scratchy guitar sounds join the clanking, scraping, and staticky feedback. Side two's "In Periphery" is the longest piece, at just over 13:00, beginning with a pulsating drone and gradually adding layers and layers of percussion of all sorts. The sound gets denser and denser, with the different rhythmic lines thrown quite out of synch--a simple, but very effective ploy. The only piece I didn't care for was "Unfortunate Architecton," with ponderous organ-like chords over a long, rambling discourse on architecture. Otherwise, nice work.

JOHN DUNCAN
Dark Market Broadcast (CD)
(Staaltape)

This CD was pretty hard to review. Two of the compositions are untitled, and the nine were mastered into just

four tracks, making it impossible to separate the pieces. Fortunately, Dark Market Broadcast was easier to just sit down and listen to, with its hard-edged electronics and emphasis on sound rather than song. Some pieces take the form of persistent, mind-numbing repetitive mechanical noise, with garbled conversations buried beneath. Others are quiet, like a heartbeat, or electronic rain and soft panting. Those looking for form or melody should avoid this disc, but I quite enjoyed it. Sharp packaging (Duncan is also known for his video work) merely adds to its class.

808 STATE
Ex:el (CD)
(Tommy Boy)

Ah, there's nothing like a bit of instrumental house music while you're reading or pounding away at the computer keyboard at work. Tracks like "San Francisco," "Leo Leo," "Cubik," and "Techno Bell" are infectious enough to get your energy flowing, but non-intrusive enough to not distract you. Cool synths, danceable rhythms, and a sprinkling of samples and other effects make this enjoyable all the way through. "Spanish Heart" and the LP version of "Ooops" do have vocals--by guests Bernard Sumner and Bjork Gudmundsdottir, respectively--but these are the weakest of the lot. Ex:el has spawned three solid 12"-ers already, and I bet they'll be more to come.

ELEVEN SHADOWS
Eleven Shadows (cassette)
(Hugen)

Impressive, if somewhat calculated-sounding tape from Ken Lee and friends--and quite sophisticated for a hometaper project. Side one is the more atmospheric side, with somber keyboards, ethereal chanting, and Eastern instruments, such as the sitar and gamelan. "Salve Regina" reminds me of Skinner Box, with its hypnotic beat and the vocals of Kristen Jaeger. Most of the second side has harder percussion and found vocal clips, "Night Flight To Ihasa" with staid piano chords and frenetic saxophones from Bob Kee. "Yearning" is fluid solo piano with lots of sustain pedal. This tape is eclectic and cerebral--satisfying fare for fans of This Mortal Coil and the like.

ENTRE VIFS
L'Ordre Par Le Bruit (CD)
(La Procedure)

"The silence of John Cage is overrated," claim Entre Vifs. Noise and chaos are the watchwords here, as up to three "operators" use instruments such as the "rumbler," "crackler," and "new shriller" and feed the output through all sorts of delay, compression, and distortion--the output being these excruciatingly dense sounds of destruction. (These French dudes may be disciples of Luigi Russolo, n'est-ce pas?) These guys could chew up the Haters and spit them out without batting an eye. If you require any kind of subtlety or musicality, run like hell. If sheer volume and noise intrigue you, check this out.

ESPLENDOR GEOMETRICO
Live In Utrecht (LP)
(Esplendor Geometrico)

This record with the handsome black cover is purportedly the last by the semi-legendary Spanish masters of the distorted drumbox. Along with the usual industrial-strength crunchy beats and occasional shouting, there are samples, effects, and electronic bleeps and warbles. But this is by no means acid house or any kind of dance record (though I hear that EG get spun in a few adventurous Spanish discos). At least some of these tracks have been previously released, but here are different versions in a well-recorded live setting in Holland. Be sure to pick up on what may be your final chance to hear these guys. I just hope they continue the excellent work of their record label. --Manny Theiner

MONSIEUR JEFFREY EVANS AND LA FONG
Music From Binghamton (7")
(Sympathy For The Record Industry)

Here's two of the most sloppy, drunk, and dumb party rock tunes I've heard in a while. This Evans guy appears to be from some Homestead combo, but fuck if I know who. I don't wanna know. [Gibson Bros. --ed.] Sounds like it was recorded on a boombox. Absolutely unintelligible. More money was spent pressing it on orange vinyl than on recording it, for sure. --Lawrence Crane

DE FABRIEK
Made In Germany (CD)
(De Fabriek)

Fascinating disc that ebbs and flows for almost 75 minutes, one track blending seamlessly into the next, leaving your head swimming with unfocused images. There's some prodigious mechanical noises; manipulated vocals (sounding like a nightmare where everyone's talking, and you can't understand a word their saying); clanking percussion and vocals modulated together; dense, blurred fields of sound; screams and splashing water; and quiet, but persistent rhythms and spacey synths. For some excellent head trip music, check this disc out.

FAT LADY SINGS

FAT LADY SINGS
Twist (CD)
(Atlantic)

This Irish band didn't knock me over the head, coming on like a less anthemic Waterboys, but in the long run, they won me over. Ballads with thoughtful arrangements are clearly the group's strength--that's almost all they do. The 11 songs here have stuffed-up, nasal-sounding vocals, plaintive keyboards, minor chord strumming, and the barest of drumming. Violins and harmonicas also enter from time to time. "Arclight" begins with just voice and piano, stark yet tender, with songwriter Nick Kelly singing of things that should have been, but somehow never could be. And I can relate to that.

FATIMA MANSIONS
Viva Dead Ponies (cassette)
(Radioactive)

As promised, this is a true compendium of different ideas and elements, some of which work and some of which don't. But when the rift is so wide between the good and the bad, you wonder why they bothered. The hard-edged rock, with evil vocals, screaming guitars, and the occasional keyboard thrown in, is great--particularly on "Angel's Delight," "Chemical Cosh," and "The White Knuckle Express." But then they throw in some weak, cheery junk ("The Door-To-Door Inspector") and a few pretentious ballads ("You're A Rose," "Viva Dead Ponies"), and whatever good feelings I had about the tape are erased. Hopefully, if they decide to diversify next time, they'll at least make it all good. --Richards

FLAHERTY/COLBOURNE/DOWNS
Primal Burn (LP)
(Tulpa)

As you may know, straight improv is something I listen to only with great reluctance, but these guys do it better than most. My only previous exposure to Flaherty and Colbourne was on a 7" comp, Footprints Of God III, a small dose that hit with a POW! Primal Burn is an LP-length trip, with alto sax player Paul Flaherty and drummer Randall Colbourne joined by bassist Richard Downs. Together, the trio can be cacophonous, screeching sax and bass blending with one another, or they can chill out into a more sonorous passage of surprising beauty, while Colbourne splays out a varied percussive backdrop.

GERMAN SHEPHERDS
Unreleased b/w Live (cassette)
(Tears Compilations)

German Shepherds are one of those psychosexual aberrant occultic power electronics bands a la M/SR or Whitehouse. Tears collects a bunch of unreleased tunes, plus some decently recorded live cuts already available on their LP and 7", but long out of print. There are plenty of spooky and spacey electronic sounds, spoken lyrics about drugs, sex, and Christ. "Booty Jones," a powerful remixed track, concerns child molester and kidnapper Kenneth Parnell. The tape comes with a bio and discography of the group. —Manny Theiner

GERMBOX
Groaning Bridge (7" EP)
(Aural Rape)

Slow, drowsy, metallic rock with lyrics that seem to have been written in a state as incoherent as I'm in now. Somebody's yelling about something, but I can't quite make out what it is. Ever feel like you're mired in a big pool of molasses?

GOD AND TEXAS
Industry Standard (LP)
(Lovehammer)

This Columbus band expands upon what they only hinted at on their previous 7", blowing it away and making this easily the most punk rock LP of the issue. God And Texas send out a great, heaving wall of sound that takes Husker Du and brings it into the 90's, running it through a noisy Sub Pop filter along the way. Heck, the ferocious drumming on "Mood For Self-Indulgence" grabbed me so hard, my beer sprayed all over the bed. All of side one is pretty much awesome. Unfortunately, the band hits the doldrums for most of side two, before salvaging things with another winner, "At My End." Almost a great LP, but not quite.

GOTHIC HUT
Big Holes (CD)
(Show Me)

Dreamy, laid-back stuff from the gloom-tinged L.A. scene associated with Fourwaycross, Independent Project, etc. Some ethereal guitar tanglings (e.g. on "Autobody Experience") are complementary to the dark rock underpinnings, but then the uninspiring vocals come in and ruin my post-4AD mood. Oh, well. —Manny Theiner

GREATER THAN ONE
Trust (LP)
(We Never Sleep/Alamut)

If you're a GTO fan and are expecting some more pulse-pounding industrial fare, be prepared for a shock. This clear vinyl LP contains two long, flowing orchestral sides which represent the early phase of the band unknown to many. On Trust, percussion takes a back seat to lushly textured synths and occasional wordless vocals. A few desolate piano notes and found newsclips round out the mix. Side two folds in "A Time For Us" (the theme from Romeo And Juliet) for unknown reasons, but this album is substantially more thought-provoking when compared to their last sterile EP, Index.

GRIFTERS
The Kingdom Of Jones (7" EP)
(Doink)

Another decent 7" outing from this Memphis band. "Encrusted" is the best work the Grifters have committed to wax this far, tugging on my heartstrings, anyway. I like how they can rock, pull back into a softer jangle, and then churn forward again in a screech of guitar feedback. Stressed out vocals add to the impact. "Daydream Riot" (perhaps a nod to Sonic Youth?) is maximum pop & roll that drops off the map in a premature ending. Also represented is the other side of the band, in the echoey acoustics of the almost Syd Barret-like "Another Song" and the slower, more tortured "Snake Oil." Of course, I like the louder stuff better.

GUMBALL
Special Kiss (cassette)
(Primo Scree/Caroline)

Back in 1983, I remember finding the first Velvet Monkeys LP in a used bin in Berkeley for five bucks. I'd heard a song of theirs a few years before and really liked it. The LP was a real letdown, and even the song I'd heard before was represented by a totally fucked up version. People keep telling me Don Fleming is a genius, and by association he should be (S. Youth, Dinosaur Jr., 1/2 Jap), but man, this LP is another letdown. Some kinda 60's rock/pop thing with distant/oh-so-cool vox and endless guitar noodling underneath. Even Teenage Fan Club can't spark any life into their guest appearance here, and side 2 has horrible keyboard additions, some even by Thurston Moore! Don't get me wrong, this isn't an extremely bad thing, just a total letdown, dude.
—Lawrence Crane

H.P. ZINKER
The Sunshine CD (CD)
(Roughneck)

A trio with a bass and guitar/vocalist from Austria and a New York drummer. This is an EP, ostensibly to promote the track "Sunshine," re-worked here from a previous mini-LP. It's a decent tune, loose and playful rock—like a good Firehose tune. Lemonhead Evan Dando sings some Poe words on a pretty song, they skrock all over "Take Five," and the last tunes are kind bad hard rock attempts. [??? —ed.] There should be a new LP, Hovering, out now...it may be O.K. —Lawrence Crane

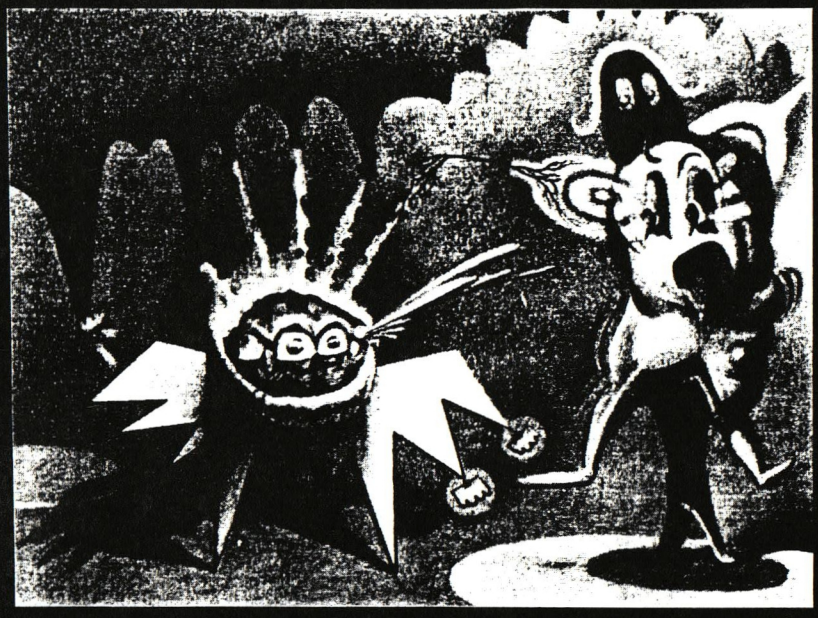
HAMMERBOX
Hammerbox (LP)
(C/Z)

After I heard "Size Of The World," I was psyched to hear the rest of the album. And I was groovin' as "Bred," "Size," and "When 3 Is 2" roared out of the speakers—solid bass and drums, nice guitarwork with a hint of NW grunge, and warm vocals from Carrie Akre, with just a touch of growl. But by the time the country-tinged ballad "Under The Moon" came around, I was thinking it all sounded a little too perfect, a little too pretty, the backing vocals just a tad artificial. And as the Divinyls' like "Texas Ain't So Bad, Really" spun its way across the turntable, I began to wish the record would hurry up and end. Take the first side, make it an EP, and then we'll talk.

HEAD CANDY
"At The Controls" b/w "Watching The Sun's Trail" (7")
(Link)

60's pop with a bit of crunch from this Iowa band that includes members of Hollowmen and Dangtrippers. "At The Controls" offers airy harmonies and dual guitars that chime and drone in a compelling way. The B-side adds a bit of Seattle-style overdrive and roughens up the vo-

TREEPEOPLE



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cals, too. Some stronger drumming would help out this band, but this is a pleasant bit of wax, nonetheless. Cool purple vinyl, too.

HEADS UP! **photo: Bill Thomas**

HEADS UP!
Duke (cassette)
(Emergo)

What I like about Heads Up is the way their music has a greater buoyancy than that of most of the so-called funk & roll groups, whether they're thrashing out (as on "I'm Alive") or cruising at mid-tempo ("Crippled Dog"). The NYC group's weakness is that they just jam out for awhile and then stop—their songs seldom gel into anything really cohesive. "Dave's Song" is the exception, and the EP's finest moment. The crisp metal-funk intro paces the streets with a low, threatening bass and sharp, crackling snare. Cold, spoken vocals are held back from exploding. The song then transforms into almost Pink Floyd-like space rock, with flowing, luminescent guitar leads. Heads Up haven't reached greatness, by any means, but they've got the potential.

HED
Zonk Screech Yowl Vavoom Crunch (7" EP)
(Exploding Cow)

Unfortunately endemic to the scene is the problem that Sub Pop/Am Rep 7"s always receive so much attention, regardless of quality, while an excellent EP by a mellowish indie rock outfit such as this CT combo stays buried in the 'zine muck. This 4-song deal, recorded with Kramer (if you care), is worth the $3 you'd pay for it, and fairly rockin' as well, so write to them and get a free cassette, too, if you're so inspired. --Manny Theiner

RICHARD X. HEYMAN
Hey Man (CD)
(Sire)

Power pop in the Jules Shear vein (or maybe Squeeze plus a little Tom Petty), with clean, bright production. This Mr. Heyman's obviously a talented guy, as he wrote all the songs and played damn near all the instruments. His guitar and piano flourishes are especially of note. I certainly wouldn't be offended hearing "Falling Away," "Thought I'd Seen Everything," or "Civil War Buff" on the radio, but taken as a whole, Heyman's debut is just too tidy and carefully orchestrated for my taste.

HIGH RISK GROUP
"Daddy Rolex" b/w "Empty Hands" (7")
(Harriet)

"Daddy Rolex" is about as close to a perfect song as you'll get. Debbie Nadolney's voice is threatening and expressive, twisting into a slight growl as she delivers the cryptic lyrics. Mary Ann Peacock's bass writhes uncontrollably, Jack Salerno's drums run into you like a train, and Ed Yazijian's violin keeps on digging, digging. Riveting and powerful. The flip has jangly minor-chord guitars and more flowing violins, ending before you can quite get a grip on it.

HOUNDS OF HEAVEN
"Freddie's Dead" b/w "Sinking Ship" (cassette)
(Full Throttle)

This cassette single has two primarily electronic tracks which, if nothing else, are impeccably produced. Enclosed by a full-color insert with a beautiful photo, this demo is aimed to get them some attention, and it succeeds. The music isn't quite my style, more intended for fans of KK and Wax Trax, but for those folks, this is more interesting and accomplished than most. "Freddie's Dead" is a fast-paced dance track with nice string arrangements and an interesting and unusual "bass" line. "Sinking Ship" is the slow one, similar to some Frontline Assembly tracks, heavy on atmosphere, with a steady beat keeping it together. A very clean, metal-ish solo livens up the bridge. Better than most in this genre. --Mason Jones

HULLABALOO
Lubritorium (LP)
(C/Z)

I don't know why, but I love these guys. Are they any different from any of those other grungy, metallic rockers with swinging long hair? Well, for my money, Hullabaloo pack a punch with better aim, instead of just slugging away wildly. Guitarists Kevin James and Doug Cawley riff and wail, while Tom Quinn bellows away unintelligibly. Drummer Chris Rosen keeps the pot at a rolling boil, and Quinn's raucous sax (actually, it sounds more like a trumpet) rears its ugly head from time to time. A couple of tunes ("The Lickyerbutt Song" and "Blow Me Fucking Canada") rumble away without causing much damage, but not a bad third album, overall.

ICKY JOEY
Pooh (LP)
(C/Z)

Here's five veterans of other Seattle combos (incl. Love Battery and Thrown Ups), with typically perfect Jack Endino production. Beyond that, it's mostly O.K. and harmless riff-rock with some real dumb, not funny lyrics. I suppose it's meant to be fun, but it's not--especially with the tuneless voice singing these songs. Ub.
--Lawrence Crane

ILLUSION OF SAFETY
RVE (cassette)
(Complacency)

Here's something a little different from this Chicago outfit. Instead of discrete compositions, RVE is more a succession of sounds that fold into one another. Listening to this tape is like being blasted by torrents of water from a hundred fire hoses, standing in the middle of a swarm of insects, listening to the scraping of a huge furnace from the other end of a heating duct, or lying in a field with birds chirping, jet planes overhead, and an impending thunderstorm on the way. So press play, turn your imagination on, and relax.

IN SLAUGHTER NATIVES
In Slaughter Natives (CD)
(Staaltape/Soleilmoon)

Dark, powerful, almost Wagnerian music, the first seven tracks on this CD were previously released as a cassette in 1988. "Death, Just Only Death" has a massive, Laibach-like sound, an angst-ridden chorus, and kettle drum percussion. "CHRIST" is marked by bittersweet strings, found vocal clips that are reduced to hushed whispers, and percussion that drags its feet in a world-weary pace. A bit of guitar abrasion sneaks in on "Media," offsetting the cold, grey synth and rhythm tracks. "Head is slower and more dirge-like, complemented by industrial noises and chilling sound effects. Very vivid and poignant stuff. As for the four bonus tracks, "Fall Apart" and "Dusk Of

Hope," recorded last year, fit in quite well, but "Punishdown" and "Napalm Limit" are more typical beat-oriented cuts that sound like Wax Trax outtakes. But hey, just program in those first seven songs, and this disc is hard to beat.

JAWBOX
Grippe (LP)
(Dischord)

It's amazing how this is Jawbox's first album, yet they've attained such a degree of musical maturity. (I mean, Unrest have put out a lot of great stuff, and they can barely play their instruments.) The sound betrays the band's punk roots, but the trio go about their thing with a laid-back, melodic style. Jay Robbins (ex-GI's) lays down crisp guitar chords, Kim Coletta tosses in some rich bass, and Adam Wade contributes some really nice drumming, with a good, sharp sound. Robbins' singing, while not exactly practiced, conveys a lot of nuance. "Tools And Chrome" and "Paint Out The Light" are real sharp, and Jawbox do a pretty fair version of Joy Division's "Something Must Break," but "Ballast" and "Green-Line Delayed" take the classic D.C. sound and just water it down. But give 'em some time, Jawbox may be lightweight, but their music, for the most part, has a high tensile strength.

JOHNNY AND THE JUMPERCABLES
"Kielbasa" b/w "Georgia Skinheads (Must Die)" (7")
(Stanton Park)

AC/DC meets the Smithereens on this 45. "Kielbasa" combines real guitar firepower with sophomoric lyrics about a certain sausage-shaped organ, while "Skinheads" has some growling slide guitar and a grungier, bluesy feel This stuff rocks and all, but I get the feeling it was created for those who've lost a few brain cells...

DANIEL JOHNSTON
Continued Story (LP)
(Homestead)

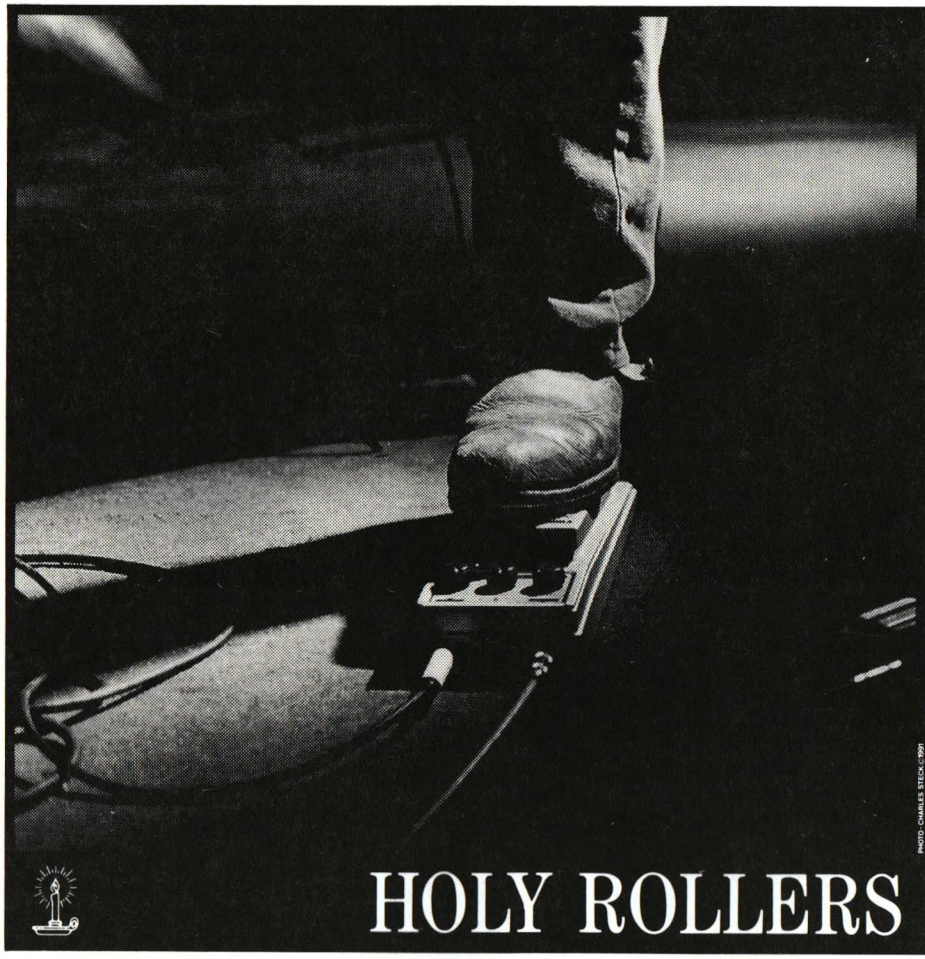
O.K., my appreciation for Daniel Johnston has gone way up since I saw the documentary on his life at NMS, but I really enjoy this record. Johnston can lay his soul bare, but there's a sense of fun in addition to the pain. He blends worldliness and naivete on Continued Story, letting (as on "Etiquette") false starts and mistakes fall where they may. You gotta love his interplay with the little girl on "Running Water Revisited," complete with Bob Seger inadvertently recorded over parts of the song. I even dig the country-blues of "Ain't No Woman Gonna Make A George Jones Out Of Me" or "Her Blues," and the Texas Instruments turn in a fine showing on the tracks they appear on. But the best part is that when, on "Ghost Of Our Love," Johnston yells, "Yeah, alright!" you know he really means it.

JONESTOWN
"Twenty Five Years" b/w "I Love You You Big Dummy" (7")
(Sympathy For The Record Industry)

This 45, on yellow vinyl, follows what seems to be a Sympathy pattern of backing an original song with a cover tune. Jonestown's own "Twenty Five Years" is a slow, druggy-sounding tune with numbed out vocals, but the guitars do erupt into a minor squall now and again. On Beefheart's "I Love You You Big Dummy" (and I always thought it was a Howard Devoto song), however, the band really comes alive. The singing takes on much more of an intensity, the drums have a decent punch, and the guitar really packs some drive. The A-side really ain't bad, but the B-side is more like it.

JUST SAY NO
"Crickets" b/w "Failed The Test" (7")
(Rave)

What's the name of that Cheap Trick song from the live album where the band keeps riffing buh-buh, over and over again? Well, that's what "Crickets" reminds me of. (Yes, the shout-along vocals are here again, thank heavens.) The second song on this burgundy 45 is sludgy garage fare. But the worst part is that the punk intensity level is only half that of their "Pitbulls On Crack" 7". And as



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K.G.G.M.
Revenge Of K.G.G.M. (CD)
(Alchemy)

The liner notes are in Japanese, so I can't read that information, but I do know that there are four guys in this band, who stuffed 20 songs onto this CD. I can also surmise that they like the Ramones a lot, since they cover "Rock 'N' Roll Radio," Blitzkrieg Bop," and "Beat On The Brat" (herein titled "Gaki O Dotsuke"). They also cover the Butthole Surfers' "Sweat Loaf," though, so they're not locked into the Ramones thing. They do sound remarkably like them at times, which for me is a good thing. There's tons of energy here, great fuzzed-out guitars, yelling, and general fun to listen to. It's not all that easy to find good old cool pre-punk, but this is some, and I like it a lot. --Mason Jones

KICKING GIANT
Boyfriend Girlfriend (cassette)
(Loose Leaf)

I don't know if this tape's title describes this NYC duo's relationship, but Kicking Giant consist of two people who go about things in a scruffy, Beat Happening sort of way. On one hand you have the vigorous strumming of Tae (which occasionally breaks down into a twisted, snarling mess) and on the other you have the tap-tap-tap drumming of Rachael. Production chores are handled by my pal Kevin's hero, Kramer. Now, for me, music of this bare bones style has to be exceptional for it to be pulled off, and this pair can reach that plane on occasion. Kicking Giant's best moments are on "House Dress" and "Saturday," where they slow things down and get more subtle with the dynamics. Tae's guitar loses is brittle edge and takes on a whole new lyricism, while Rachael's backing vocals seem to come floating across a great distance. Some of the other tunes, particularly the dry rendition of Jonathan Richman's "Summer Feeling," fall flat.

KINGPIN
Holding Tomorrow (7" EP)
(Suburban Voice)

It's hard to believe Suburban Voice would have anything to do with something as mild-mannered as this. Mellow punk with metallic chords that makes you yearn for the days of Jerry's Kids and the Proletariat. Wimpy production might have something to do with it, but I'm not so sure.

KNIFEDANCE
"Loaded Heart" b/w "Stalking Ground" (7")
(Hit & Run)

As usual, Cleveland's Knifedance straddle the punk/metal line and do a pretty fair job of it. "Loaded Heart" is a hefty rocker that progresses into some spluttering metal action, while "Stalking Ground" stretches Tom Dark's vocal chords to just short of the breaking point. It's somewhat doubtful that this 45 will remain long in your memory, but Knifedance score a few points for giving it their all.

KRACKHOUSE
Drink. It's Legal (CD)
(Metamkine)

At 23 songs in 38 minutes, there's a lot to swallow here--artsy madness, absurdist humor, and pointed political statements all crammed into brief, lopsided, spasmodic compositions. Down to a Kramer-less trio on this one, Mike Sappol, Doug Henderson, and Matthew Ostrowski toss out grating vocal rants, twisted and knotted guitar lines, random tapes sounds, and strangulated sax grunts. Indeed, there's everything from "Farmer In The Dell" quotes to noisy potato chip crunching. The casual listener won't have the patience to suck the nutrition out from the chewy gristle, but those into the NYC downtown scene will want to listen up.

LAST CRACK
Burning Time (cassette)
(Roadracer)

Stop the presses. It's not only one of the first metal tapes I've gotten all the way through, but I'll probably even keep it. Roadracer has found a winner, a genuinely talented band with a vocalist who realizes there are no set rules, and therefore isn't required to shriek to convey anger. "Wicked Sandbox" is the standout track--good lyrics, even. There are other noteworthy songs ("Energy Mind," "My Burning Time"), but most impressive is the absence of a truly bad song in the bunch, although the tedious "Precious Human Stress" comes close. And don't think it's appeal means it's tame; these guys are vibrant, and violent, and angry. They're just really good at what they do. --Richards

LEEWAY
Desperate Measures (cassette)
(Profile)

Nothing fancy here, hardcore gone metal out of NYC, with dual guitar riffing and a minimum of leads. Not a bad album, and the band seems to have their heads on straight, but things tend to get a little bit samey after a while, despite a short hip-hop number in "2-Minute Warning." The strongest moments on this second and much delayed release come on side one, with the heavy "All About Dope"; the anti-suicide "Soft Way Out," with its gang backing vocals; and "Stand For," a tune with melodic guitarwork that's a shade lighter than the rest of the album.

LEGENDARY PINK DOTS
Traumstadt #3 (cassette)
(Staaltape/Soleilmoon)

I've never been much of an LPD fan, particularly of their newer material, which I find very forced, pretentious, and over embellished. Instead of being some gross caricature, however, these songs--recorded live between 1985 and 1988--are more organic and flowing. "Do not expect to be entertained, we do not jump through hoops for you," goes the intro, and the Dots proceed to weave dark synth and guitar lines, over a bed of dramatic vocals and smooth rhythms. Songs such as "The Light" and "This Could Be The End" are velvety and involving, with chopper sounds and other aural props used with taste and discretion. "Mezhanyne" is rather dry and Gothic for my liking, but overall I found this tape quite enjoyable.

LEGENDARY PINK DOTS
Traumstadt #5 (cassette)
(Staaltape/Soleilmoon)

I have to say I've never been a particular fan of the Dots. It seems as though you either love them or hate them, although I can't say that I do either. All that said, though, I did enjoy this cassette. I suppose "Quirky" would be one way to describe it. Bits of this and that, from classical pieces to pseudo-folky pronouncements stagger past. I happen to like Ka-Spel's voice, though many people can't stand the Dots primarily because of that. If you're a fan, this is naturally a must-have. If you're not, perhaps this could introduce you as well as anything to the mystical world. If you don't like their past endeavors, this tape isn't likely to change your mind. --Mason Jones

LIEUTENANT CARAMEL
Lieutenant Caramel (CD)
(Metamkine)

Complex industrial stuff from a prominent French outfit--the collage nature and ringing electronic tones similar to 60's academic pieces has me thinking there is carefully thought-out music concrete going on here, either tape cutups or computers, or both. One piece, "Presse Bouilles," was performed live at V2 in Holland. I liked the sounds on "Escalier De Service" the best, since they were varied and harsh. If you're a fan of P.16D4/SBOTHI or Subotnick/Wuorinen, you'll enjoy this CD. --Manny Theiner

LORD LITTER
The Birmingham Basher (cassette)
(Alternate Media)

This time around, Lord Litter provides us with a collection of straightforward rock sounds. He explains in the liner notes that he has always held a fondness for British rock, citing groups like the Move as influences. And sure enough, the influence is clear in these songs, many of which have their roots in the blues. The strangely nasal twang of the vocals didn't appeal to me much, but the nicely subdued sense of humor did. The low point is another unnecessary cover of "Wild Thing," but tunes like "Death Walks Behind You" and "Megastar" definitely tilt the balance in the positive direction. This is some nice-sounding, ordinary rock, with no pretentions, And that's kind of refreshing. --Mason Jones

LOUDHOUSE
"Shy Animals" b/w "Faith Farm" (7")
(Caroline)

Guitar-powered rock out of Detroit. Reminiscent of a more serious Jane's Addiction, these two cuts have a metal edge, plus funky touches. Vigorous and energetic, with intelligent drum work, and not bad at all. Green vinyl.

LOUDHOUSE
For Crying Out Loud (cassette)
(Virgin)

Amazing what signing to a major label will do to a band. "Faith Farm" and "Shy Animals" are here in unaltered form from the Caroline single, but the other tunes, though hard-hitting, seem tame in comparison. It's hard to know where to place the blame, as the newer recordings were done in the same studio, with the same producer. Perhaps they just said to themselves, "O.K., guys, this is for real, don't blow it." Or maybe the guitars are a little cleaner, the vocals a little more on top of the mix. And where'd that acoustic ballad come from? Anyhow, For Crying Out Loud reduces Loudhouse to just another hard rock outfit.

LOVE CHILD
Okay? (LP)
(Homestead)

Gee, I don't know. Four songs from the band's EP on Trash Flow are redone for this longplaying debut, but "Sofa" and "Know It's Alright" are not nearly as crazed or spontaneous sounding as they were on the EP, and do we really need handclaps on "He's So Sensitive"? And what about that lame drum sound? Don't get me wrong. I love Alan Licht's cheap, buzzing guitar sound and the way he reels off brilliant leads effortlessly, and "What It Breeds" and "Willpower" are great songs, but this band could do a lot better.

MALEVOLENT CREATION
The Ten Commandments (cassette)
(R/C)

Relentless death metal (there's barely a pause between songs) with typical Darth Vader-type vocals and songtitles like "Remnants Of Withered Decay" and "Multiple Stab Wounds." But fear not, 'cause these guys remove their leaden shoes on side two and really thrash out, especially on the standout "Injected Sufferage" (a song about AIDS). Don't think I'll listen to this again, but it's not bad.

DON MALONE
Algorithmic Music Performance (cassette)
(no label)

This is a one-of-a-kind cassette of electronic music, which was accompanied by a couple of introductory sheets describing the setup used to create the sounds. Primarily it seemed to be a synthesizer controlled through use of a computer keyboard, though that's naturally a simplification. The main point is how the results sound, and I'm afraid they seemed just a touch random for my taste. Electronic burbles and bleeps spin by, without anything

the Hounds of Heaven

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in the way of development. As a curiosity, it's certainly intriguing, but the listening experience left me wanting. --Mason Jones

RITA MARLEY
We Must Carry On (CD)
(Shanachie)

I kind of wonder how many **File 13** readers are into reggae, or expect to read about it here, but goddamn it, you're gonna. This is a mighty fine release from Mama Marley (her first in seven years!). There's four songs of her late husband's that she covers, all of which were a bit obscure, and plenty of fine new tunes. Plus, this is real reggae, not some of those over-electronicized releases I've heard. Look, if you're gonna buy any reggae, buy this! —Lawrence Crane

ALAN MARTIN
Flux (cassette)
(Alternate Media)

Alan Martin's latest effort, Flux, represents the synth player's most sophisticated work to date. "Fluctuations Pts 1-3" take up the entirety of the tape's first side and are a lot like an instrumental, less robotic Gary Numan—deep, dark, spacey, and whirling onward into the night. Quite excellent. A greater variety of instrumentation and a tighter musical structure mark the four pieces on side two. "Forever And A Day," with some nice jazzy guitar from David Martin, could be played on "adult progressive" radio alongside Enya and Earl Klugh, "Spring Valley" and "Pastimes" tend towards new age, but with far more charm and human character than most comparable fare. This side may be too frothy for a lot of ears (especially "Sun Jazz"), but the quality is quite high.

ALAN MARTIN/TRANCEPORT
Dancing/Static (cassette)
(Alternate Media)

This tape was compiled of tracks previously released on Martin's own label, Phase Tapes, and showcases both his solo work and that with his group Tranceport. The A-side contains the Scottish musician's own stuff, resembling the electronics of Tangerine Dream or Jean-Michel Jarre—lighter fare than I normally enjoy. "Illuminated Cave" and "Come The Night" are quite unchanging, with an easy beat. Pleasant to listen to while chillin' or puttering around the house on a hot afternoon. The other side, however, has a much greater richness of texture and feeling, thanks to additional keyboards and guitars from S.J. Robinson and R. Gillies. From "Wonderful" through "Subtongues," these pieces are accessible, but much more involving for the listener, taking him or her on a journey through many moods and places. Nice stuff.

G.W. McCLENNAN
Watershed (CD)
(Beggars Banquet)

Robert Forster and Grant McLennan's debut solo efforts have given the world a fascinating glimpse at the forces which made the Go-Betweens a truly great band. Watershed sows why McLennan was a perfect counterpoint to his former songwriting partner, as his style is lighter and more daydreamy, while Forster is more direct and more willing to dig into specific examples of life's pain. This album has some moments of glory, as shine through on the heady pop of "When Word Gets Around" or the simple but effective strumming of "Stones For You." Other tracks are far more of others' styles than anything on Forster's Danger From The Past, "Easy Come Easy Go" having some very Byrds-like guitarwork and "Black Mule" taking the Lou Reed narrative approach. Watershed isn't a bad album, but had I not been a Go-Betweens fan, I doubt I would have been very impressed.

MEATHOOKS
Psychoshitmachine (7" EP)
(Disastromix)

Everyone's getting into the NY noise act. Meathooks have distorted guitars and drumbox not unlike a Big Black/Smersh hybrid and hoarse-throated vocals like Dissecting Table. But the Meathooks are clearly lo-tech rock, not industrial noise. This 7" keeps me interested, especially with Jap-noise-type songtitles such as "Hell Generator Dub" and "Meathooks vs. Rapeman," but there's nothing really new or particularly standout about it. —Manny Theiner

MECCA NORMAL **photo: Jon Snyder**

MECCA NORMAL
Water Cuts My Hands (CD)
(Matador)

This duo is definitely an acquired taste, and one I'm still in the process of acquiring. David Lester's guitarwork is more arresting than ever, though, brittle and abrasive like Billy Bragg's, only more inventive. Jean Smith's cat-like vocals are still harsh and screeching, as she delivers a no-holds-barred lyrical punch—often about sex and the sexes. And with such sparse accompaniment, she's right in your face and tough to ignore. CD also includes Calico Kills The Cat.

ROGER MILLER
Xylyl And A Woman In Half (LP)
(New Alliance)

If you hadn't noticed yet, Roger issues pop records (No Man) on SST and weird records on New Alliance. This one is two different works, "Xylyl" being a seven-part commissioned work and "A Woman In Half" being a soundtrack to an independent film. "Xylyl" is lots of samples and sequenced patterns with strings and horn (trumpet by V. Sun Bob Weston!). There's lots of cool sounds and music, vaguely coming off like non-pop No Man instrumentals. "A Woman In Half" is total Eno/Budd action. Beautiful, scary piano and synth work with "loose" and structured parts. I found this soundtrack the more rewarding of the sides. Now sit and wait for a No Man pop record again... --Lawrence Crane

MODOM
51.54 (cassette)
(Enoch)

Modom is an intriguing concept, and perhaps the absolute modification of art into a public forum. Unfortunately, in this particular instance, the artwork isn't very exciting or interesting. Modom is a concept in which anything becomes an "issue" of Modom simply by virtue of having the word "Modom" on it and being assigned a number. Then a letter describing the issue is sent to Box 3112, Florence, AL 35630 to register the Modom and the number. The Modom in question here is a cassette of found sounds from radio and TV mixed together. Nothing too new, and it sounded too random to possess any degree of meaning, so I was left listening to mere scraps of conversations, much like being at a party and stepping back for a moment to listen to everyone talking at once. Alright for that moment, perhaps, but it wears thin rather quickly. Needless to say, 90 minutes of it is far too much. —Mason Jones

MONET'S GARDENS
Pray (cassette)
(Imagine!)

Good cover photo, of a reproduction of the Goddess of Democracy statue from Tiananmen Square. Good use of violins on "I'm Gonna Love You," the tape's best song, even though it does sound remarkably like Neil Diamond's "Solitary Man." The title track is O.K., indicating that the more there is going on in the group's songs, the better. And that's everything positive I have to say about this album. Slow numbers are awful, exposing weak guitarwork and weaker vocals. Over 50 minutes of generally forgettable music. Not only that, but it's boring, too. --Richards

MONOCHROME BLEU
Stay Or Go (cassette)
(IRRE)

This 60-minute tape is a fairly unexpected release from Monochrome Bleu. Much of it is what might be called almost mainstream pop music, while other pieces feel jazzy—perhaps because of the frequent use of saxophone. Interesting rhythms and sounds mix with very melodic vocals in "Tough Guys" and "Stay Or Go," while "Guilty! Or What?" makes use of tapes about Jim Jones. Essentially, this cassette is very hard to pin down, which is one of the things I like about it. The other things I like are the excellent production, imaginative use of sounds, and plain old good songwriting. Unusual and recommended. —Mason Jones

MONSTER MAGNET
"Murder" b/w "Tractor" (7")
(Primo Scree)

Loud psychedelic guitars that make Mudhoney look like the junior leaguers they really are. Guitars that roar as loud as anyone else's and really deranged and distorted vocals that are pretty tough to understand. "Murder" is a good song, and "Tractor" is mighty enough that it almost doesn't matter that it's not. But singles don't let these guys rock out the way I know they can.

MUD PIE

MUD PIE
These Days (cassette)
(no label)

These Days is a dreamy, droney tape, as if these guys suddenly discovered the Velvet Underground, or something. On the 13 songs here, the duo create whatever drama they can by easing up on the gas rather than stomping down harder. "Something Is Awful" inspires with its subtle changes in strumming, and "Your Word Is Good For Nothing These Days" actually rocks a little, under some nice vocal harmonies. But overall, Mud Pie leave me feeling rather lukewarm on this latest effort. Too much glockenspiel, too.

LA MUERTE
Kustom Kar Kompetition (CD)
(Play It Again Sam)

I was surprised to receive this in the mail, since it's not really in my usual sphere of reviewing. Add to that the fact that last time I heard La Muerte, I really disliked them, and I figured I was in for trouble. But, surprise, I came out really liking this thing after a couple of listens. It's got some pretty fast-moving slabs of guitar rock, and though they occasionally wander dangerously close to heavy metal stereotyping, for the most part, everything remains safely in a realm similar to Amphetamine Reptile's trademark sound. Plus, there are some tracks here and there which break away into other styles, mostly successful, such as a pseudo-country track which is kind of fun. There's a sense of humor apparent, which probably prevents them from drifting into self-importance. This isn't at the top of my noise-rock pile, but it's not at the bottom, either. --Mason Jones

MUSLIMGAUZE
United States Of Islam (CD)
(Extreme)

In case any of you still aren't familiar with the Muslimgauze way of life, this CD is as apt an introduction as any. It contains music inspired by the struggles of the P.L.O.--anger channeled into undulating rhythms that blend into an alluring Middle Eastern groove. United States Of Islam is fine for background listening, but when you approach it from the right plane, the emotional power comes spilling out. You really should have at least one Muslimgauze release.

NARWHAL
The Album (LP)
(Esplendor Geometrico)

Actually a joint release between several labels, this is a knockout of an album. Its two long, subtle compositions are hypnotic and mesmerizing, but there's a lot going on here. Intersection layers of spinning, pulsing, floating, and droning noises fade in and out again, sometimes dwindling down to a sparse layer or two. There are some abrupt changes as well, and once in a while, some orchestral strains filter through, or sitars or Durutti Column-like guitars briefly take over the stage. But this is a rather dry description—you must hear it for yourself. Nice hand-done wraparound cover art, too.

NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN
"Happy" (CD5)
(Columbia)

When you first hear Ned's Atomic Dustbin, it's like, oh no, not another Manchester band. (I don't know enough about English geography to tell you where they're really from.) But, wait. There's a difference. Maybe it's the robust melodic punch of dual bassists Alex Griffin and Matt Cheslin. Maybe it's the way, on "Happy," they take such liberties with the song's tempo, slowing up and then lurching ahead with delirious joy. The single's other two songs are energetic, but unremarkable, so the jury's still out. I'll let you know after I listen to God Fodder.

NIGHTMARE LODGE/BLACKHOUSE
Ice Skin/The Gospel According To The Men In Black (LP)
(Minus Habens)

Blackhouse have been busy these days. Their side of this shared LP is somewhere in the middle of their evolutionary path. Much of it is slow and spooky, while sometimes a rhythm enters to move it along. It's certainly more instrumental than their other recent material, which personally I prefer. The Nightmare Lodge contribution here starts out with fairly noisy vocal manipulations occasionally similar to Blackhumor, and fading in and out of somewhat ambient textures. The side concludes with some very nice neo-classical style music. All in all, a very nice piece of vinyl. --Mason Jones

NISI PERIOD
Nisi Period (cassette)
(no label)

70's prog rock meets 80's post punk on this three-song tape. Dark, moody stuff with guitars and drums that circle some kind of strange ritual bonfire, while strident vocals bark out commands. "Dearly Dearly" has some subtler sections, with synths that glow like dying embers, before the wind swoops down and fans the flames back to life. Well done, but as with some of the later Bauhaus stuff, I gotta be in the mood.

NO MAN
"Diamondback" (remix) b/w "The Clamp" (7")
(SST)

Roger Miller and sidekick Andrew Decker deliver an A-side that combines a menacing feeling with that of a child's fantasy. Deckard locks into a strong rhythmic groove, while Miller rasps away on guitar. Definitely the catchier of the two tracks. "The Clamp" has the convoluted tension of Mission Of Burma, without enough power to quite break loose from its reigns. White vinyl.

NOMUZIC & McGEE
Goonz (cassette)
(Audiofile)

Accurate title. Two hometaper goons twiddle knobs on 11 analog (natch) synths. Cosmic, shrieky, and sedate (i.e. quasi-new agey) sounds spew forth. Sounds that would have turned heads in the 70's now just float lazily in my room like tribbles on acid. --Manny Theiner

NOTHING PAINTED BLUE
The Bellyspeak EP (7" EP)
(Jupa)

Once again, NPB prove themselves capable of writing a great song, and once again, they fall short of putting together a great record--despite this one's only containing three cuts. "K Is For Karnival" is a somewhat nervous-sounding Embarrassment-style scratchy pop tune with some witty rhymes. "Let's Kiss," however, tries to get too Sesame Street cute, while "Foundation Slips" starts out in a catchy fashion, but drags on a hair too long.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
6 Months Of... (cassette)
(Widemouth)

This cassette comes with an informative insert with a color Xerox cover, as well as some additional information about the ideas that were behind the performances. The cassette contains 90 minutes' worth of portions from a number of live performances, each of which was an improv session based upon certain "CAMU's," or rules governing the performance. As might be expected, some of the material is quite good, and some of it doesn't quite hit the same heights. Horns squeak, voices mutter, percussion sprinkles about here and there, and various unidentifiable sounds make their presences known. I enjoyed a lot of the material, but the segments of speaking in between unfortunately slowed the pace down a bit. The recording quality is fairly high throughout. Fans of improv should probably check this out. --Mason Jones

1000 HOMO DJ'S
"Supernaut" (12")
(Wax Trax)

Either of the two songs would have fit well onto any recent Ministry album, which is no surprise considering the unbilled involvement of Alain Jourgensen. "Supernaut" is the better of the two, a powerful track with exactly the sort of barking, rasping vocals, grinding bass and guitar you'd expect, while the beat pounds away at you angrily. "Hey Asshole" is a nightmarish cop's lengthy tirade at his victim's hair, earring, etc., which doesn't get any funnier as it goes. The beat kind of stagnates, too. Amusing punchline, but I'm not sure the trip is worth it. --Richards

ORB
The Orb's Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld (CD)
(Big Life/Mercury)

Very interesting and very non-commercial for a major-label recording, Orb's music is so sparse you almost can't classify it as "songs." "Little Fluffy Clouds," "Super Nova At The End Of The Universe," and "Perpetual Dawn" have cool, cool synths and sampled spoken word passages to go along with house, hip-hop, or reggae rhythms--though sometimes the music goes for several minutes without any beat whatsoever. The longest track, "Star 6 & 7 8 9," clocks in at nearly 19 minutes (together, all eight take over 70 minutes), with spacey, whirling synths, waves, jet planes, and no rhythms at all. The airy vocals cut in and out, creating a rather mysterious effect. The only major flaw here is the occasional malaproprism--awful Minnie Ripperton sample on "Star" or sweet classical violins on "Into The Fourth Dimension"--which spoils the mood. These Adventure are neither particularly catchy or danceable, but I'll put 'em on next time I want a little night music.

ORCHESTRAL MANOEUVERS IN THE DARK
Sugar Tax (cassette)
(Virgin)

After the ambitious failure Dazzle Ships, O.M.D. got bogged down in the cloying pop fluff of Junk Culture. Sugar Tax is like setting the way-back machine to 1982, before the big guitar era, when O.M.D.'s Architecture & Morality championed pristine, tasteful pop. Oh sure, a hint of house influence sneaks in here and there, on songs like "Call My Name" and "All That Glitters," but those regal textures are back, and Andy McCluskey's voice carries more feeling than it has in years. Some tunes, such as "Sailing The Seven Seas" and the single "Pandora's Box," are lightweight even by synth-pop standards, but in general, the old O.M.D. formula sounds surprisingly fresh.

ORGANUM
"Iuel" b/w "Wolf" (7")
(Dom America)

A very nice taste of Organum on this clear 7". "Iuel" contains the graceful, floating sounds of a recorder-like instrument, plus the billowing reverberations of a guitar being struck on its body rather than its strings. Disappointing only in its brevity, this piece left me begging for more. "Wolf" is more powerful, drenched in waves of droning feedback. The slow, tense crashing of piano chords resounds, blending with the existing textures. Very nice, indeed.

OSWALD FIVE-O
"A Love Supreme" b/w "Crushproof" (7")
(Imp)

Uncomplicated stuff here. "A Love Supreme" has guitars that unleash a healthy bit of noise, but in a very nonchalant way. The drums plug away unhurriedly, and the vocal harmonies are downright untidy. Not overpowering by any means, but with a certain intrigue. On the flip, the foursome give us some rather average mid-80's jangly garage pop.

OVERFLOW
Through Department Store (cassette)
(Slusaj Kajglasnije)

Yikes! It's rock & roll from Yugoslavia. Where'd that come from? The opening tunes on this tape are best, as Overflow bash away at circa 1980 punk numbers, with circular saw guitars, echoey vocals, and vigorous drumming. Side one's closing song, "November," changes the pace--a sow, wistful tune that turns into an angst-ridden rocker. Side two is on the garagey side, including some mellower, more jangly songs. Nothing here comes close to the first side's "I Don't Know Why" or "Naked," though. Some good material, but a mixed bag overall.

PALE SAINTS
Flesh Balloon (EP)
(4AD)

Pale Saints are still dreamy on this EP, but less swirly and hallucinogenic. The two songs on the first side almost melt into one another. "Hunted" is a lovely, downtempo tune that's certainly in ho hurry to get anywhere. One guitar buzzes absently, while the other is bright, like sunlight playing across the surface of a pond. "Porpoise" is a wistful instrumental, reminiscent of Sad Lovers & Giants, with glistening keyboards and somber drumming. The second side if much less deserving of attention, however. "Kinky Love" is a syrupy ballad (supposedly popularized by Nancy Sinatra) sung by new member Meriel Barham, while "Hair Shoes" is a brief demo that really does sound like an unfinished idea. Flesh Balloon is somewhat of an improvement over the last disappointing EP, Half-Life, but it's still not anywhere what these guys are capable of.

PASTE
Pigeon Skin (cassette)
(Shrimper)

Short, lo-fi, sloppy emo-acoustic ditties a la Sebadoh. This label features the Sentridoh tape and noisy underground pop of Nothing Painted Blue and Wckr Spgt, just so you know what you're getting into. As DIY as it gets in the proverbial collegiate basement--no need to know how to play guitar or sing, just let the words and music come out the best you can. --Manny Theiner

PAVEMENT
Perfect Sound Forever (10")
(Drag City)

Everyone's been going rave, rave, rave about this Stockton, CA band. And while I won't quite echo those sentiments, I will say that the fact that Pavement realized, back in '89, that this sort of non-pro rock would go over big was sheer genius. This is the kind of noise Big Black might've made in the kitchen before their first cup of coffee. Cool enough to keep you interested, but not substantial enough to say, "Yeah, I get it." And that's O.K. with me.

LAURENT PERNICE
Axident (CD)
(Permis De Construire)

If I remember his first LP, which I really liked, there was a lot of cold, dark, and dense mechanical rhythms like you hear on the Cold Meat Industry label, and his vocals were sparse and in French. I like this CD considerably less--he uses a monotonous shouting voice that sometimes sounds rather stilted because of the language barrier while he's trying to get across lyrics in English. Most of the songs are beat/dark rock-oriented (perhaps due to Gerome's guitar from the band Nox), and almost enough to turn heads at Wax Trax. Though a couple of the rock-based songs are interesting ("Sweet Dream," "Fool Of Hope"), I naturally gravitated to the more experimental instrumentals. Laurent Pernice may be changing his music in a rock direction, like Neubauten did, though I'm not sure if that's for the best. --Manny Theiner

POOPSHOVEL
I Came, I Saw...I Had A Hotdog (CD)
(Community 3)

About time Comm 3 came out with an album that can really rock your socks off. Funny part is, it comes from Poopshovel, a band whose first release, Opus Lengthemus, was pretty darn awful. Here, the Wisconsin quartet cast aside the nonsense and get down to the business of making some noise. Richard Whitaker's guitar kicks out plenty of metallesque chops and firepower, and the rhythm section of Peter Kaesberg abd David Kovalic flexes its muscle while displaying some jazzy twists and turns. Singer Bill Crawford stills blows away on trumpet, but refrains from trying to be the Tower Of Power horn section. Yeah, there's some funk, but not too much, thank God. This is rock & roll.

PRIMUS **photo: Michael Lavine**

PRIMUS
Sailing The Seas Of Cheese (cassette)
(Interscope)

More so than any album I've heard recently, my feelings for this hinged on the kind of mood I was in. Listened to it on the way into work one morning and found it really irritating. Listened to it one weekend evening and found it to be a lot of fun. And that's basically the

UNREST
imperial f.f.r.r.
Teen Beat 77
6 no.
volume reference tone 0:11:00 [0 b.p.m.]
suki 3:22:88 [160 b.p.m.]
imperial 7:35:45 [108 b.p.m.]
i do believe you are blushing 4:49:67 [136 b.p.m.]
champion nines 3:16:21 [104 b.p.m.]
sugarshack 3:31:03 [256 b.p.m.]
isabel 2:12:77 [104 b.p.m.]
cherry cream on 3:50:94 [152 b.p.m.]
firecracker 3:02:51 [120 b.p.m.]
june 3:52:11 [168 b.p.m.]
loyola 5:46:01 [128 b.p.m.]

story with Sailing The Seas Of Cheese. You're either going to find all the funky basslines annoying or entertaining. You're either going to find Les Claypool's somewhat nasal vocals cool or grating. You'll certainly be impressed by the originality and humor throughout. "American Life" is rather spooky--there's an ominous, hellish aura surrounding many of the songs--and "Tommy The Cat" and "Fish Out" really kick. As for the humor, there's the sweeping drama (?) of "Here Come The Bastards" and the reprise, "Los Bastardos," to begin and end the tape; the quirky, yet potent "Is It Luck?"; and "Jerry Was A Race Car Driver." Worth having, even if you don't like it at first. It might just be you. --Richards

PROJECT
Project (cassette)
(Rock City)

There are worse bands to emulate than Rush, and Lord knows there are worse bands doing it than Project. On the level of Rush imitators--and if they're tired of the comparison, too bad--these guys are pretty impressive. The music has the dynamic drumming, the shrieking vocals, and the pounding guitar of the much-scorned Canadian rockers, but with the life and genuine power of their earlier days...not the listless melodrama of something like Hold Your Fire or Presto (that title is still good for a chuckle, even now). A lot of energy and pretty good arrangements. Even the lyrics, usually an apparent afterthought for bands of this sort, are respectable. The bio reveals that Project has spent several years touring CT and RI covering groups which I largely despise, but everyone's got to eat. --Richards

PSYCLONES
Best Of The Psyclones (CD)
(Ladd-Frith)

Covering over a decade of music, this collection of material from the prolific Psyclones demonstrates a willingness to experiment and try their hand at a variety of styles. Tracks like "Gift Of Noise" and "Stuck In A Rut" are fuzz-rock (they always seemed slightly weakened to me, due to use of an old beatbox drum machine, but they're cool nonetheless) and "Between Space" demonstrates their ambient side, from the Another Bridge LP. More recent tracks, such as "Move!" and "Art Decade," show the development of the Psyclones, with a stronger, more confident feel. The latter track, in particular, has an excellent bassline. For fans of the Psyclones, this is a great collection, and for neophytes, it's a perfect introduction. --Mason Jones

PUFF TUBE
Emergency Peanut (2x7" EP)
(Scat)

Here's a band that can bounce all over the road and still make it mostly a fun trip. Emergency Peanut consists of 10 bite-sized morsels, ranging from wacked-out Wallmen-like pop ("Bib Lettuce Breakdown," "My Baby's A Great Cook!") to Royal Trux-like damage ("Jazz Cinnamon," "Midget Tolerance"). "Circus Freak" digests and regurgitates 60's sitcom music (or at least it sounds that way), while the charming "Love Theme" has some lyrical guitar work and distant organs. It'd be difficult to sit through an entire album of this stuff, but...

PURR
Praise The Bottle (EP)
(Kk)

Six short songs in a style that's quite a surprise coming from Kk, a label better known for their techno-dance releases. This group is, instead, a rather folky/bluesy duo, with most of the tracks consisting of a bare-bones guitar backing for the singer's too-many-cigarettes growls. I disliked "Weekend From Miami" intensely; I don't know why they opened the album with it. "Sunny Side Up Easy Over" is much better, with a cool melody and nice echoey guitar background. The other tracks roll by pretty smoothly, with confident vocals and decent melodies, though the closing "Midnight Blue Cocktails" is slow and boring. I suspect it was supposed to be sensitive and heartfelt. This stuff certainly didn't fire me up with excitement, but it is a little different. --Mason Jones

RAKE
"Cow Song" b/w "My Fish Died" (7")
(L)

The top-notch "Cow Song" bristles like a tumbleweed made of razor wire--one that comes rolling straight at you, tearing up everything in its path. Some quick-wristed drum work (reminiscent of Expando Brain's Nick Hook) keeps the whole mess moving. The B-side is even more direct, ripping and snorting in a full-tilt Unsane attack mode. It cuts a much narrower swath however--it's easy to step to the side and let it blow past you. Still, an auspicious debut for this VA-based label. Yellow vinyl.

RUTH'S REFRIGERATOR
Suddenly A Disfigured Head (LP)
(Madagascar/Cargo)

As soon as you hear the name Alan Jenkins, you should be thinking eccentric pop. The lyric sheet, for example, contains words that bear little relationship to what actually gets sung here. Think of it as enigmatic folk rock, with childlike vocals from Ruth Miller, smart drumming from Robyn Gibson, and crisp guitars from Jenkins himself. As for the lyrics about dogs and fish, well that's your guess.

SANDY DUNCAN'S EYE
"525NTC" b/w "Sub" (7")
(Flipside)

Another sharp little record from Flipside. "525NTC," in particular, gleams with a hard brilliance--punk-influenced stuff with anxious, distorted vocals, fuzzy but biting guitars, and superb drumming. And clean production makes each part stand tall. Side B is not as remarkable, but solid nonetheless.

ST. JOHNNY
Four Songs (7" EP)
(Turn Of The Century)

O.K., so these guys really aren't the most original band in the world. They combine melodic pop and guitar noise like a heavier Love Child or a more laidback Superchunk. But I gotta stick my neck out and say this EP just slaps together the right elements of this and that to make it appealing. Maybe it's the certain ring the guitars have to them, or the way the way the drummer rolls his way over the kit and back--or the shiny red sleeve. But I dig "Velocity" and "Matador," and the other two songs are pretty O.K., too.

SCHOOL OF FISH
School Of Fish (CD)
(Capitol)

Gee, where to put these guys on the fish ladder? Not as strong as Fishbone...and they don't quite have the hooks of An Emotional Fish...or the sting of Jellyfish...God, I'm so damn funny, I could go on forever! Incredibly tame; you could get right in the tank and pet it, if it weren't so uninteresting. The songs run the gamut from listenable pop ("3 Strange Days") to crummy softer numbers ("Speechless" and "Under The Microscope," cleverly distinguished by slower guitar playing) to rock, I guess, with beats, lyrics, and, for that matter, music you've heard a thousand times before ("Talk Like Strangers," "Wrong," and "Rose-Colored Glasses"--a significantly bad track). Excruciating. The worst disc I've heard all month, and yes, I'll be throwing this one back. --Richards

SCREAMIN' POPEYES
Gas Music From Jupiter (cassette)
(no label)

Surprisingly good stuff from the nation's midsection.

These guys deliver music that's pretty laidback, but which challenges throughout. Their one-sided tape contains everything from spacey synths and varied percussion to Old World bandoneon-type sounds and nervous, grating guitars. "It's About Jan" even integrates Brady Bunch dialog without seeming either forced or ridiculous. Quite an intriguing and satisfying melange.

SEAM
"Days Of Thunder" b/w "Grain" & "Which Way To Go" (7")
(Homestead)

I was kinda proud of my Codeine comparison until I got around to reading the bio, but this is a single to die for, even if mine isn't purple. "Grain" is all but indescribable. Seldom has slow been this powerful, seldom has each lonely drumbeat been so meaningful, or has each simple strummed guitar chord conveyed such beauty. Seam is an unlikely project—a one-off consisting of members of Superchunk, Bitch Magnet, and Lillies, and most of them aren't even playing their usual instruments. (Mac exhibits a greater feel for his drum kit than 99% of real drummers today.) But somehow it all just clicks. And who would've recognized the Big Boys' "Which Way To Go," with Lexi's soft-voiced vocals, Sooyoung Park's meager guitar tracings, no drums at all—and at one-tenth the tempo? Pretty fucking brilliant.

SEBADOH
Gimme Indie Rock (7" EP)
(Homestead)

7" on which Sebadoh rediscover rock & roll. The title cut rocks rather absent-mindedly, as Lou Barlow tells the tale of his disenchantment with the underground music scene, while "Ride The Darker Wave" lopes along in an off-kilter Wallmen sort of way. The songs on the B-side are the kind of introspective hometaper things we've come to love this band for. Nothing here is as brilliant or heartfelt as anything on either album, but fans will want to pick this up, too.

SEKIRI
Take Me To Sekiri (CD)
(Public Bath)

Move over Shonen Knife. Sekiri are another Japanese female punk/pop group who play simple Ramones-like tunes. Like Shonen Knife, these four women are somewhat naive in terms of musical skills (though this was recorded back in '88), but Sekiri are much more risque in terms of subject matter, and they have a much heavier edge, with a tougher bass sound and more thump to the drums. I'm not sure how long the American fascination for Japanese girl groups will last, but "Endless" and "Youth," in particular, are good, rockin' tunes. We'll see what their newer stuff has in store for us.

photo: Carole Segal

SEPULTURA

SEPULTURA
Arise (cassette)
(R/C)

As hard as it may be to believe, I listen to more new heavy metal releases than I do of any other genre. But I still find it impossible to tell most of the groups apart. This aptly named album does indeed rise above the rabble, the four Brazilian dudes having the confidence to kill swiftly rather than bludgeoning their prey to death. On songs like "Dead Embryonic Cells," "Subtraction," and "Meaningless Movements," guitarists Max Cavalera and Andreas Kisser play off one another effectively, with

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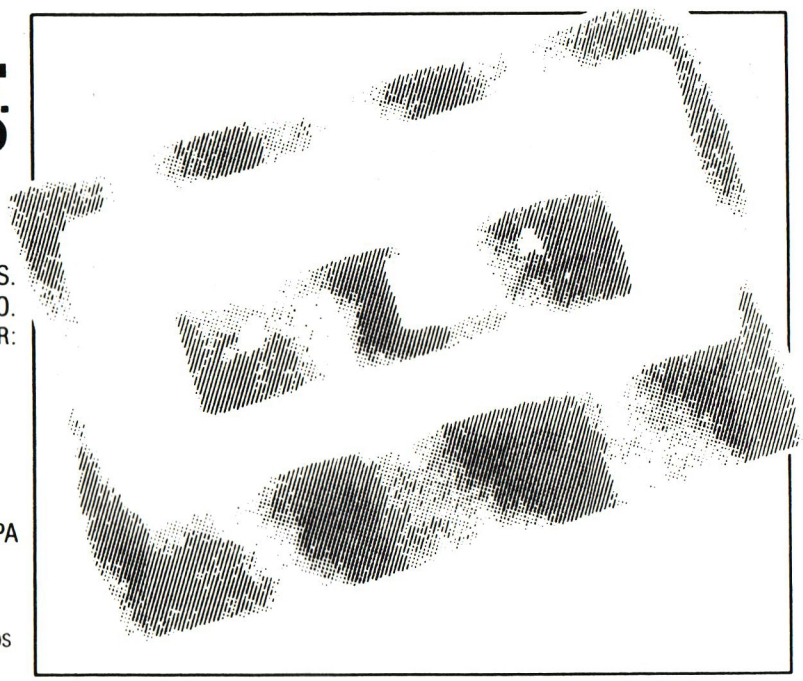

heavy but varied riffs as well as lightning quick leads. Drummer Igor Cavalera impresses with his restraint as much as he does with his playing, and in general, Sepultura keep their music interesting without having to resort to cheap gimmicks like, God forbid, melodies. Their lyrics tell only vague tales of anger, war, and religion, but so what? Arise is ferocious stuff.

SHARKBAIT
Blowtorch Face-Lift (CD)
(Primitech)

Maybe nobody told them its illegal to mail combustibles (my copy came with two disposable lighters), but the musical cargo here is almost as dangerous. The disc starts out with "Vertical Assault," two minutes of cathartic pounding on drums and scrapmetal. "Oh My Brothers!" has crackling megaphone vocals over African-style rhythms, and bass and guitars finally make an entrance on "And Crush," adding some additional weight. Some quieter, Eastern-flavored interludes help break things up on the way to the final, culminating "War Crush," a 15-minute pound-and-screamathon. Sharkbait aren't quite as dense or noisy as Stickdog or Sink Manhattan, but their creative sense makes them perhaps more powerful. Decent work.

NILS SHIELDS
Nude Knight (CD)
(GLP)

Heavy, bombastic dirge rock tunes that lumber on for seven or eight minutes a pop. Supposedly, Shields was once in Blue Daisies, but Nude Night completely lacks the brutal intensity of Wilt. Shields' Frank Sinatra-like over-singing is a curious contrast to the plodding music, but it doesn't make this disc any more listenable. The sparse, trance-like "In Fontainbleau," with a subtler power, is the sole bright spot on an otherwise gruesome album.

SHLONK **photo: Linda Dawn Hammond**

SHLONK
Eee-Yow (LP)
(Community 3)

This band is a lot like Gwar, except instead of a bunch of ugly guys, you've got a bunch of attractive women and one ugly guy. This LP contains beefy, clumsy, obnoxious rock, with songtitles such as "Dogshit" and "Ten Buck Fuck." Yeah, "Arm Your Children" is cool, with its pounding, but that's about it. Michelle Bouchard's drums are just a little too sloppy, and as for singer Allan Warnock, his loose-lipped, blubbery vocals (on "Shlonk!" "Knob Tailed Gecko," and others) render much of this album downright unlistenable.

SHRINKWRAP
Fear, Loathing & Admiration (cassette)
(no label)

Potent stuff from these Pittsburghers. "I've Fallen... And I Can't Get Up" sounds like the commercial's Mrs. Fletcher under airraid attack, "Dope" has machine gun fire, screaming, and distorto guitars, while "Torture" meshes wild laughing and bruising percussion. While certain themes do reoccur from time to time, there is quite a diversity on this cassette. "Farewell" is a dreamy piece with blurred guitar and piano, and "Panic" and "When Anxiety Strikes Deep" are pure hum/drone compositions. Shrinkwrap are an intense outfit, and they serve up a winner in this tape.

SHUDDER TO THINK
Funeral At The Movies (EP)
(Dischord)

Shudder To Think move even further away from punk rock on this EP. With airy, 60's-like vocal harmonies reminiscent of the Three O'Clock, only the songs' crisp guitars and nimble drumming keep them from blowing away. Funeral opens with two sterling tunes, "Chocolate" and "Lies About The Sky," that brim with life. But it's downhill from there, with each successive tune getting progressively weaker. The nice, droney parts of "I Blew Away/Ride That Sexy Pony," the record's last song, fade out, revealing a rather pretentious spoken word piece that just couldn't end fast enough to suit me. This is a real mixed bag.

SIN DROME/ANTON SHEDLOCK
Journey Into The Fields Of Pain/...Less Than 24 Hours
(General Purpose)

This limited edition cassette (of just 100) comes nailed in a neat little wooden box, with the contents split between Sin Drome and Anton Shedlock. The Sin Drome side is beat-heavy industrial with distorted Skinny Puppy/Front 242-like vocals and rough-textured guitars. What makes songs like "Turnback" and "The Jokes On You" different, however, are the varied, driving rhythms that keep your attention locked in. Side two is very tame in comparison. "I Ask Myself" and "Gone Away..." sound like a poor imitation of Depeche Mode, while "Give Me Anything" and "Breakdown #4" are rather dry and lifeless. "A Human God" has some interesting sounds--like someone bouncing ping-pong balls off a paddle, but the piece is rather short and inconsequential. Too bad this tape doesn't quite live up to the exquisite packaging.

SKIN YARD
1000 Smiling Knuckles (cassette and CD)
(Cruz)

This is a pretty solid album of heavy, hard rock/metal with deep vocals that drip venom and guitars that pound away unmercifully. There's a blessed lack of anything resembling a ballad or having a whit of social merit. Many of the songs also seem a trifle flat, though, resulting in a decent listening experience that is fairly quickly forgotten. I'll play it again, though, if I'm in a crummy mood--not that there's any chance of that. The best track is the eerie chiller "Words On Bone," which brings to mind portions of the Terminator soundtrack, for what it's worth. Incidentally, Cruz cassette boxes are less resistant to the sun's rays than are Tommy Boy cassette boxes, but Tommy Boy's appear easier to break.
--Richards

SKIN YARD
"1000 Smiling Knuckles" b/w "Hey Bulldog" (10")
(Cruz)

O.K., so Richards wound up with both the cassette and the CD. Well, I got the way more collectable 10", so fuck you, buddy. A-side of this single's a rockin' thing, and the flip is a pretty cool cover of some obscure Beatles tune. I'm not jealous.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE RD.
"Viroqua" b/w "Between The Reigns" (7")
(no label)

Madison supergroup with Killdozer's drummer and Appli-

ance-SFB's bassist. Strong, but familiar pigfuck bachelor rock at a rather plodding pace, with Cows-type vocals on "Viroqua." Elvis lookalikes on the back cover, C/U 3. —Manny Theiner

SMASHING ORANGE
"Not Very Much To See" b/w "Collide" (7")
(Ringers Lactate)

As far as straight rock & roll singles go, this one's right up there. Smashing Orange take the formula they came up with on their first 45 and refine it until it glows red hot. Psych/grunge stuff with guitars that burn, drone, and bleed all over the place. Drummer Tim Supplee sounds as if he's going to knock over his kit, and there is some damn fine tunage as well. Scoop this up!

SMASHING PUMPKINS **photo: Michael Lavine**

SMASHING PUMPKINS
Gish (CD)
(Caroline)

While I'm not sure it's worth the heaps of praise it's been getting, Gish is certainly a likeable debut. "Rhinoceros" is late 60's-style, Eastern-influenced psychedelia, broken by twisted metal leads, and "Bury Me" combines punk and intelligence in a manner similar to Fugazi. "I Am One" is catchy, Dinosaur-like noise pop, "Daydream" (the only tune sung by fem bassist D'Arcy) is more contemplative, and "Snail" is a poignant culmination to the whole album. Smashing Pumpkins show excellent musicianship, particularly in Billy Corgan's varied guitarwork, and there's always something going on. I'd probably just like 'em better if they rocked a little more.

SNAKES
Happy (LP)
(Adult Swim/Dischord)

This LP leaves me rather puzzled—pop with a 60's British feel, and recorded back in '85-'86. The band sounds like the lighter side of the Jam or the Kinks, with the addition of some rollercoaster organ. "Glass Eyes" and "Afraid Of Love" are catchy and upbeat, and "Happy" is nice with its sparkling keyboards. But then there's "World Upside-Down," sounding like disco-era Clash meets P-Funk, and "Jane Of The Apes" and "Hat On The Bed" are light pieces of Monkees-like fluff. The real question, however, is why Dischord would have anything to do with this.

SOLMANIA
Metaphor Chorus (CD)
(Alchemy)

Five tracks of severe noise, somewhat similar to Hijo Kaidan and K.K. Null in that I think it may be guitar-generated. There are vocals, too, if you want to be generous and call them that. Liner notes in Japanese don't tell me much. The packaging is beautiful, with a clear acetate insert and a CD marked with radial lines so the two together act like a moire. The noise here is strong and textural, and has a nice feeling of physically created rather than electronically generated. Definitely worth a try for fans of the style. —Mason Jones

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LA SONORITE JAUNE
Anastia (cassette)
(Complacency)

Recorded in late '88 and 'early '89, this tape opens with disquieting electronics and cyclical noises--as if you're in a fully automated factory. The factory is inhabited by small mechanical beings, like the gem eaters in Crystal Castles. The rhythms soften to an atmospheric throb as the space opens to reveal an alien landscape. Then the long work almost comes full circle, as repetitive sounds creep back in, to the accompaniment of an unearthly wail that sounds part electronic, part human. Not as masterfully delicate as Instania, but overall a decent effort from this French group.

SOSUMI
Bad Day At The Lab (CD)
(Synthetic)

Sosumi come off as similar to the Psyclones, emitting a twisted sort of rock. Some of the tracks are vaguely metalish, some have a slightly humorous silliness (such as "This Is Supposed To Be Fun"), and others are more or less straight rock. While I didn't find anything on here more engaging than anything else, it didn't come across as bad, either. Maybe just not as inspiring as I might have wanted it to be. Their cover of "I Am The Walrus" is pretty good, though after Pop-O-Pies there may not be anything left to do with it. The packaging for the CD left me wanting more than the music did, actually. A decent rockin' effort. --Mason Jones

SPIREA X
"Chlorine Dream" (12")
(4AD)

Spirea leader Jim Beattie was in some early 80's group called Primal Scream, which, quite frankly, I don't remember at all. Whatever the case, this band may well be the most beat-heavy group 4AD's ever had. The lead cut is far and away the catchiest and most imminently danceable, with ringing Rickenbacker guitars and buoyant vocals. Quite nice. "Spirea Rising" and "Risk" are slower to grow on you, dronier, and hovering in mid-air, rather than soaring or swooping. Not one of the label's more promising acts.

SPIREA X
Speed Reaction (EP)
(4AD)

Is this the 4AD of the future? I hope not. Loads of atmosphere, but it's sort of like hearing the ocean roar in a seashell--it quickly wears thin. It's funny to see frontman Jim Beattie, formerly of Primal Scream, knocking the ethereal 4AD sound and the Stone Roses. Lazy, often droning music with an all-too-familiar guitar and a tedious drumbeat like this doesn't break any new ground. The vocal harmonies are boring, too. Of course, these four songs are only a tiny percentage of the Spirea X material coming to light in the next few months, so maybe the rest of it has some life. --Richards

SPIT
The Persecution Of Genius (LP)
(N.T.S)

The last time I heard this guy was on his Road Pizza 12", but this LP features crude songtitles ("Eine Kleine Naked Music"), on-stage banter about various female guest musicians ("Show 'em your titties, Michelle...They are nice fucking tits"), and lots off equally juvenile stuff. "Tipper At Home" is about Ms. PMRC having fun in the bathroom with a vibrator, and "Stick Yo Cock" even has rap vocals about Spit's sexual prowess. Cool, guy, real cool. This could be the industrial equivalent of 2 Live Crew. But "Censorship" and "Phone Sex" are revved up Wiseblood-like techno-industrial (the latter featuring dialog with an actual phone sex girl who isn't afraid to match wits with Mr. Spit), and "Stick Yo Cock" gets kind of humorous with its treatment of a line from what I presume is some porno flick ("Stick your cock up her ass, you motherfucking worthless cocksucker!"). I won't say much for the abhorrent sexism that permeates this album, but at least Spit does have a bit of talent.

SPROTON LAYER
"Lost Behind Words" b/w "Space Red" & "Jam From Outer Space" (7")
(New Alliance)

Well, here's one from the vaults--Roger Miller and two brothers on some surprisingly well recorded stuff from over 20 years ago. "Lost Behind Words" is quite enjoyable, with Miller's cavorting basslines and brother Larry's constantly rolling drums. The flip has two short, more jam-oriented pieces that don't do as much for me, but this is quite a curiosity piece from New Alliance. Clear vinyl.

STARVATION ARMY
Mercenary Position (LP)
(Rave)

Cleveland guys with a flair for forward-ho punk rock. Singer Sean Watkins has absorbed vocal nuances from Fluid/Nirvana-type outfits. Could be fun live, could open for Jane's Addiction with the partytime boogie appeal (funkiness, sax, SST-like style). These guys have been together on and off for almost ten years, and it seems the musicianship and production have steadily improved. This is their second LP for the Philly label that fucks weak shit. --Manny Theiner

STEEL POLE BATH TUB
"Arizona Garbage Truck" b/w "Voodoo Chile" (7")
(Sympathy For The Record Industry)

Grungier and less punk rock than previous work, "Garbage Truck" puts it in low gear and belches out a ton of smoke. Heavy duty stuff, but not an especially pretty sight. On the other side, Steel Pole Bath Tub pull off the Hendrix tune with surprising aplomb. The fine guitarwork roars right through the sludge. Not bad at all. Nice Bazooka Joe ripoff on the sleeve, and red vinyl, too.

STORY
The Story (CD)
(Green Linnet)

Suzanne Vega. That was my first thought when I heard "Grace In Gravity." This CD contains folk and folk-rock that sparkles with Windham Hill-like purity, Jonatha and Jennifer's delicate voices entwining like morning glories climbing up a lamp post. Jonatha, the duo's songwriter, plays guitar with a light, rhythmic style and some Michael Hedges-like touches, while the band lays down a clear, but subdued backdrop. "Grace," "Just One Word," and "Love Is More Thicker Than Forget" (the latter with the pair's voices flitting and gliding over Jonatha's piano, and nothing else) are lovely tunes indeed. But most of the disc, for me, is simply background music, albeit with a nice sparkle.

SUGARTIME
"Girlcrash" b/w "Psych-Mail" (7")
(Ringers Lactate)

Two out of my top 7"-ers this ish have to go to Ringers Lactate. "Girlcrash" had me singing out loud with my headphones on at 8 a.m., which is pretty tough to do. The song has a rich bottom end, raging guitars, and ragged vocal harmonies. The flip is a mellower, bass-driven tune with dreamy female backing vocals. Burgundy vinyl.

SWAINS
Don't Call Us (EP)
(Kk)

A couple of British-whiteboy hip-hop tracks, with good danceable beats and fairly inventive melodies. The title

track is very catchy and clean, well-produced. "We Can't Be On" has some nice sounds, as well. The other tracks are remixes and the like, so you really only get a couple of songs for your money. I don't know that anyone would really sit and listen to this, but club DJ's could probably find some use for it. It doesn't have tons of personality, but how necessary is that, anyway? --Mason Jones

TEAR CEREMONY
Nothing (cassette)
(no label)

This wasn't nearly as much to my liking as I remember Toddy's last tape, Disturbing The Ghost, being. Nothing conveys a vague sense of angst, with soft percussion, echoey bass and guitar, and indistinct vocals. "If You Were The Knife" is the tape's pop extreme, with a nice melodic bass sound, while "Bed Of Indifference" is a lengthy, more orchestral work. Not unpleasant stuff, but hardly essential listening.

TEENAGE FANCLUB
"Everybody's Fool" b/w "Primary Education" & "Speeder" (7")
(Matador)

Yeah, sometimes even we fanzine editors plunk down our hard-earned cash for a record we really wanna get. I mean, this is the stuff great singles are made of--a pure pop gem on one side and a couple of likeable filler tunes on the flip. Combining a decent amount of bluster with joyous melodies and an unforgettable vocal hook ("I don't fuckin' care/How you wear your fuckin' hair/You're still fuckin' square"), "Everybody's Fool" is the type of song that catches you on the first go 'round and makes you want to play it over again the minute the platter stops. "Primary Education" and "Speeder" are lazier, with some Jerry Garcia-like guitar playing. Teenage Fanclub reportedly have a couple of albums in the can, so let's have 'em already, huh guys?

photo: Gail Butensky

THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL 282

THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL 282
Lovelyville (CD)
(Matador)

There are son many ideas floating around on this CD that it takes a while to absorb them all. You'll be thinking, "Yeah, good song," one minute and scratching your head the next. Songs like "Four O'Clocker 2" and "Motorin' Flarey Jenkins" are offbeat, but clearly rock & roll, with an unwieldy gait and wacked-out lyrics. "Sinking Boats" starts off as the rockingest song on the album, and goes through a series of alternating gentle and jarring passages, before taking up where it left off; "2x4's" never stays in one direction for more than a few seconds; "More Glee" could be a geekier Led Zep; and "Green Eyed Lady" turns the 70's hit inside out. And then you have odd bits of noise like "Mother Uncle Delicious Tasty" and "Mark My Words," which are tossed together in haphazard fashion. The whole thing ends off with a suite, "The Crowded Diaper," which sounds like experimental post-classical music at times and like incidental recordings of people goofing around at others. You don't have to look to the cassette underground for stuff as creative and unusual as this.

THIS MORTAL COIL
Blood (2LP)
(4AD)

The mystery and melancholy continue on this third TMC release. Blood isn't as devastatingly haunting as It'll End In Tears (few things are), but it is a good deal more coherent than Filigree & Shadow. Ivo takes a number of originals and a handful of obscure covers, and spins them into an almost seamless veil. The slew of female vocalists (Caroline Cauley, Dierdre Rutkowski, and Alison Limerick among them) and the pensive string section are used to paint not a focused sadness, but a diffuse world-weariness. Dogs braking and children coughing are buried in the mix and conjure up additional images. As the label founder's labor of love, TMC epitomizes the 4AD sound more than any other band or project. Those into misty atmospheres should like Blood. Those looking for something more solid to bite into may not.

RICHARD THOMPSON
Rumor And Sigh (CD)
(Capitol)

So you shied away from this because of the seemingly unreasonable amount of praise heaped upon it by the mainstream press? Well, Thompson is not some old folkie turning out vapid music. He grabs your attention with his brusque baritone, singing earthy lyrics about various sordid characters, while his guitarwork has a brittle, forceful style. Even a simple guitar/vocal piece like "1952 Vincent Black Lightning" has a dark intensity. "I Feel So Good" is a spiteful tune about a reckless character out of jail and looking for trouble, while "Mystery

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Wind" tells of a breeze that bears nothing but bad news, and "Psycho Street" is the tale of a deranged man who sets fire to the house next door ("As the neighbors jump from the upstairs window, he films the whole thing on video"). Hardly cheery stuff. My favorites are uptempo numbers such as "You Dream Too Much" and "Mother Knows Best," where Thompson is accompanied by a host of other musicians whose organ or violin add interest, but don't overpower the songs. I might not listen to Rumor And Sigh again, but I'm pretty glad I have it on my shelf.

THOSE MELVINS
"Wasted Hippies"+3 (7" EP)
(Turn Of The Century)

Wimpy goofball rock that takes pot shots at all kinds of easy targets. On "Manchester Beat," they spoof Inspiral Carpets, Stone Roses, and the like, and almost come up with a listenable tune, but "Wasted Hippies" and "Poser Polka" are pretty dreadful. These guys rank right up there with the Dead Milkmen in my book.

TONYALL
New Girl, Old Story (CD)
(Cruz)

This collection of tepid Tony Lombardo tunes pales in the face of the Descendents' pop/hardcore love songs. Backed by the members of All, Lombardo dishes out an occasional pleasing lightweight ditty ("Telltale Signs," to name one), but overall, this CD is a downright chore to listen to. The disastrous vocal harmonies ("Last Refuge" is enough to make you cringe) don't help matters much. This New Girl is thin, monotonous, and of no use to me at all.

TYPE O NEGATIVE
Slow, Deep, And Hard (cassette)
(Roadracer)

These guys whip out heavy metal's worst cliches and images (death and destruction, chanting Druids, flailing chains, slutty babes, and more) and assemble them into something that's actually listenable (and pretty gosh durn hilarious). Take the epic opener, "Unsuccessfully Coping With The Natural Beauty Of Infidelity." It rocks out in fine Neanderthal-core style, downshifts into a slow, plodding metal dirge, and them whirls back into a frenzy. Next comes an interlude with acoustic guitar and female moaning, after which the song becomes a meaty, mid-tempo rocker with call-and-response chorus: "I know you're fucking someone else! (He knows you're fucking someone else!)." Then you get some totally pompous Cathedral-style organ chords and Gothic vocals that sound like Axl Rose at 16 rpm, and another singalong chorus. Finally, the song ends to canned applause. Unintentional comedy at its best (or else a total stroke of genius), and, hey, these guys can rock.

UNPLEASANT SURPRISE
Wrong Way, Right Picture (cassette)
(IRRE)

Dishing out pop with an Old World flair, Unpleasant Surprise intrigue the listener with a light tiptoe touch on their instruments. Accordion and mandolin give songs like "Back In The Dark" and "Terrible Feelings" a haunting melancholy, while "My Best Friend" has grim piano chords and almost martial drumbeats. Vocals suggest a somber Siouxsie Sioux. Austere stuff that holds your attention, despite a muffled sound.

VAMPIRE RODENTS
War Music (cassette)
(V.R. Productions)

Shortly after I received this cassette, I saw that it has been released on CD by Dossier Records in Germany. I'm not sure if the contents are identical, though. Anyway, this seems to be a German outfit, although the contact address is in Phoenix. Primarily electronic, but with some "real" guitar and percussion, these guys are quite reminiscent of Skinny Puppy, with more rough edges and less production. There's also a bit of funkiness that the Pups have never quite displayed. Steady beats, strong bass, distorted vocals, and tons of samples make for a fast-moving, sometimes amusing listen. There's some political awareness here, as well, with songs like "Extinction," "Crack Babies," and others. On the whole, it's well-done music with a sense of humor and some good rhythms, though nothing makes it really stand out from the pack, either. —Mason Jones

VASILISK
Liberation And Ecstasy (CD)
(Maxima Magnetica Musica)

This CD gathers together tracks previously released on LP's from 1987 and 1988, including the Acqua release. The Japanese group falls somewhere between taiko drumming and Zoviet France ambience. Tracks alternate between strong rhythms and trance-like soundscapes, with infrequent vocal outbursts. I found myself liking the rhythmic tracks best, but that's merely my own taste. But with tribal-sounding tracks like "Awakening," they grabbed me and created visions of vast forests and ritual circles of people dancing. This is a wonderful 76 minutes of celebratory sound. —Mason Jones

VERLAINES
Some Disenchanted Evening (CD)
(Homestead)

After Bird Dog came out, some bozo told me the Verlaines had broken up, to which I replied it wouldn't matter, because if Graeme Downes (the band's leader) kept on doing music, it would be the same. Well, he kept the name (and drummer!) and got going on this, a fine LP. It's the logical successor to Bird Dog, with Downes dabbling in many musical structure and writing sad, bitter, haunting songs. Obviously one of the best songwriters around these days, and no exceptions here. Buy it. —Lawrence Crane

WAG
...In A Garden, Eating Cheese (7" EP)
(Happy Tails)

"Epicurean Dream" is a sparkling slice of pure joy, though the lyrics are somewhat less than cheery. This tune could almost be a polished up Alligator, with subtle, but bright guitarwork, tight drumming, and clear vocals. "Clarence" is more uptempo, with some busy guitar, but it doesn't quite have the same impact, while "October In July" has a guitar hook that sounds like a direct cop of Miranda Warning's "Tolerance." Wag go 1 for 3 here, but that one hit is a two-run homer.

WALLMEN
Last Of The Broken Mexicans (cassette)
(Dead Judy)

I'm not exactly sure why this tape reached me; maybe Mark wanted to test me, or something. But in any case, there is not escaping the conclusion that I really hated this tape. It was well produced, I guess, and they probably enjoyed themselves, and it's professionally packaged, and all that. But I disliked the music. This sounds a lot like some of the sillier Shimmy-Disc groups that I hate, too. Tuneless singing over simple rhythms and sometimes fuzzy, sometimes folksy, guitar. The guitar was fairly bland, and the singer was off-key the vast majority of the time. Some people might think this is fun and quirky and boppy, but I guess I'm not one of them. —Mason Jones

WCKR SPGT
4 Song EP (7" EP)
(Jupa)

I just love "Francis Mitterand" and "International House Of Pancakes," two simple tunes with nonsensical lyrics and clever word play that would look pretty stupid written down on paper. Heck, even the band's name is cool! Joel Huschle's crooning could give Jad Fair a run for his

money, while Mark Given lays down enough of a musical frame to keep the songs together. "Crush It" and "Hitch Hike" seem almost incidental here, but this is a fun single, nonetheless. Periwinkle vinyl.

GEORGE WILLARD
Sleeping With Cyndy Garvey (cassette single)
(Nut Music)

There's a pretty funny concept to this cassette. George recorded over an actual cassette single and pasted new liner notes on the box. How much music you get depends on what the original cassingle was. (Mine didn't have room for "Monster Truck" or "Dub Convoy.") Musically, listening to this can be fun, in the same was listening to your pal strum away on acoustic guitar on a sunny afternoon can be fun. "I'm In Love With Everything" has some sax noodling, and the title cut includes actual recordings of Cyndy's talk show. Yeah, this ain't great art or nothin', but I don't suppose it was intended to be.

WIMP FACTOR 14
"Train Song" b/w "I'll Send You A Postcard" (7")
(Harriet)

This 45 comes with a flattened penny and sticky black tar that gets all over the record. A-side makes you want to grab your ukelele and head out to the tracks. B-side makes you want to stroll down the sidewalk, kicking a pebble along. It's a sunny day you might not remember the rest of your life, but then again, is that what sunny days are made for?

WINDOWPAIN INDUSTRIES
First Transmission Since The Collapse (7")
(no label)

This is one of those toughies, because no matter how it's described, it won't quite communicate the right idea. Side A, "One, Two And Three (Or Whatever)" consists of a cycling, buzzing sound, with loops of something going on underneath it all. Sounds simple, but there's a fair amount happening, and the feeling it creates is a bit unnerving. Side B, "Zookeeper's Theme Revisited," is entirely different, with a nice clean guitar piece with a shaker-type steady beat behind it, almost like a badly injured metronome. Very evocative, and so close to normal, it will sneak up on you. Cool looking vinyl, too.
—Mason Jones

WINGTIP SLOAT
(7" EP)
(Sweet Portable Junket)

This 4-song 7" does quite well for itself, despite a rather thin sound. (The bass is there, though.) "M31" has skittering guitars, light but speedy drumwork, and skinny-boy punk vocals. Then, halfway through, the song limps around for awhile before getting back on track and finishing the course. The other three tunes retain my interest, despite (or because of) their apparent lack of organization. And add to that burgundy vinyl and a hodgepodge of art and inserts. A heap of non-pro fun.

ZEN HOTEL
Significant Moon (CD)
(no label)

This CD was rough to review, as Zen Hotel's ugly mugs are matched by their whining, sniveling vocals. Musically, Significant Moon is a mixed bag, though never straying far from ordinary barroom rock. "Too Many Words" and "Mother" are mainstream rock & roll with a few circa 1980 new wave angles, reminiscent of Talking Heads and the Pretenders. "Ballad Of Punch And Judy" sounds like a rougher-edged Cat Stevens, and "Breezewood" is rootsy stuff with horns. "From You" and "I Dream" are deadly

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dull rockers, while "Forever Yours" and "The Preacher" are solid, if unremarkable pop tunes, with some nice laid-back guitarwork. And, sheesh, these guys are ugly.

Z'EV
1968-1990: One Foot In The Grave (2CD)
(Touch)

Handsome 2CD set with a thick booklet, chronicling Z'ev's career, and almost all of it very high quality. Born Stefan Weisser, Z'ev is known mostly for his work with metal percussion, but One Foot In The Grave exposes the public to lesser known, but equally challenging facets of his work. The more "typical" Z'ev is put forth in the crashing objects of "Shake Rattle & Roll" and the drumming on metal of "The Erl King." "Beautiful Music" and "Following In The Footsteps," in particular, bring out the resonances of his instruments. But you're also got the fine drum programming done for Ralph project Rhythm & Noise and the poetry and drums of Mother Tongue (featuring recitation by Doro Franck). But particularly wonderful are more minimal compositions which might be right at home on Lovely Records, including "Forbuli" (creaking, groaning feedback sounds), "Book Of Love Being Written As They Touched" and "Instill" (many voices murmuring simultaneously, similar to very early Robert Ashley), "O.K., Get Rid Of That" (Alvin Lucier-like recording and re-recording of voices using a tape recorder), and "Bel's" (similar, but using a bell sound effects record as the original source). Of least interest is his work with Uns, dense noise with disconnected megaphone gibberish and very little sense of organization. But in the context of this 160-minute retrospective, even those work well. A most welcome package.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Back To The Egg, Asshole (cassette)
(Shrimper)

This "anti-tribute" tape is an attempt to take the Beatles and send 'em back where they came from--totally twisted stuff that makes the White Album sound like New Kids On The Block. Paste, Refrigerator, Wckr Spgt, Lou Barlow, and others take faves, like "All My Loving" and "Hey Jude," and shred 'em until nary a recognizable thread remains. But is this irreverence or mere irrelevance? At $2 ppd., it's easy enough for you to find out.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Big One (LP)
(Flipside)

Usually, I find compilations pretty frustrating. Y'know, three good songs and a bunch of shit. This one's a miracle, in that most of the bands and songs are good or great. Great: Sharkbait (industrial humor/scare), Pop-defect (excellent as usual), Distorted Pony and Blackbird (odd dirges), Helios Creed (standard weirdness for him), Victim's Family (Sinatra jab), and Green Day (pop-punk). Good: Big Drill Car, Mr. T. Experience, Steel Pole Melvins Task Force, Cringer, Down By Law. There's a few tracks that don't measure up as strong, but if you want a good example of what's "right" with the West Coast "punk" scene, go no further. —Lawrence Crane

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Brooklyn Beat Live At CBGB's (CD)
(Brooklyn Beat/Community 3)

Recorded live to DAT, these songs may sound fine, but they show the limitations of any format when trying to bring energy from a club setting to a living room. Or maybe a lot of these bands were dull live, too. Several of the 15 artists, including Beatniks From Mars, Echo E. Hotbox, and Original Rays, run the narrow gamut from annoying to grating, with weak guitar rock/funk. The better moments include forays into punk from Noize Boize and Chemical Wedding, both of which sound like they put on good shows, and the somewhat unpleasant, yet memorable groove of Bite The Wax Godhead and the Moe. There's some quirky humor scattered across the disc, too, and the Vespas steal the show with a good jam--which primarily serves to accentuate what is lacking from most of the rest of the album. As far as I'm concerned, without some degree of spontaneity or improv, live performances are only a little more enjoyable than drinking flat Coke. --Richards

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Czech It Out (cassette)
(Alternate Media)

I don't know much about Czechoslovakia's above ground music scene, but the underground stuff sounds a lot like the Residents' Third Reich & Roll prediction of what rock music under an oppressive regime would sound like. You'll find none of the usual chord changes or drum patterns on these 14 tracks (recorded 1978-88) compiled for Alternate Media by Italy's Old Europa Cafe label. Almost everything here is excellent--and a welcome change of pace from Western fare. You've got spunky art rock with trebly guitars and syncopated drumming on Two Years Fallacy's "Major Seconds In Discussion," naive, almost Shonen Knife-like pop on the Gaz's "At The End Of The Street," and repetitive guitars and percussion that amble on and on in Marno Union's "Bobol." On the other side of the coin, there's some hair-raising violin scraping on DG 307's "Lepent Okameiku" and distant droning and squealing industrial sounds on Interpretace's "Vsechno Spatne Zpatky Na Stromy." Johanis & Co. dole out lethargic bass and sax that engulfs you without your realizing it and Kofron & Simacek use shifting patterns of a balalaika-like instrument in an almost minimalist manner. MCH Band's "Porkcember" is the most complex work here--strident guitar chords and a subdued brass punch over rambling drums and indecipherable ranting. Good compilation all around.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Drain That Dirty Water (cassette)
(Set)

Terry Burke set out to discover the elusive Massachusetts cassette culture, and this is what he found. Dirty Water ranges from female yowling like a cat in heat (Tall Bald Grandfathers) to lazy jazz squawking (Debris), gentle e-bowed guitar and percussion (Exi's), humorous garage rock (Mente) and spooky electronics (Stained Glass). Particularly noteworthy are Harberland's "Testament" (pop with a catchy bass and reverbed guitars), Jeffrey K. Freymann's "Surreal Bus Ride" (a round with text from an actual bus ride, plus real bus noises in the background), Urban Ambience's "Grand Canyon Suite" (cool guitar and sax appropriate to the band's name, and of unknown relation to the Aaron Copland piece), Dougzig's "Maurophany" (spoken word over repetitive trance-like music, showing Doug's come a long way), and Legendary Lunch's "Hardly Ever Care" (Joy Division-like gloom). A few duds tarnish this 16-cut comp, but over all, it shines pretty bright.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Dry Lungs 4 (CD)
(Subterranean)

After a very long wait, the Dry Lungs compilation series is back again, with the fourth installment. This time on CD, we're given the usual rewarding listening experience, though this one may be a bit less punishing than before. Starting with Controlled Bleeding, we get some high-tech noises similar to the material on their Trudge CD; Dissecting Table follow with some high-speed metal percussion; Minus Deltat provide a slow, tortuous piece with "Red Cross Blood Donation" chanted over and over; Helene Sage & Musical Instantane play some weird rhythmic noise collage; Heinrich Mucken lays vocal snippets over odd noises; Printed At Bismarck's Death shout in German, with noises accompanying; Robert Rich provides an ambient, new agey break; and James Levine & Paul Lemos close the CD with some keyboard-based Controlled Bleeding-like work. Overall, an excellent and varied collection of unusual music. —Mason Jones

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Funky Alternatives (cassette)
(ROIR)

The 18 selections here are taken from a series of underground dance remix LP's from the U.K., so I was looking forward to some high-powered, highly energized stuff. Instead, I found little here to be particularly "hot" or danceable. Recovering from my initial disappointment, I discovered the icy detachment of this tape to be pretty relaxing on a summer's evening when you don't feel much like moving, anyway. Catchiest stuff here was by 23 Skidoo, New Order, D.A.F., Click Click, and Thrill Kill Kult (the slammingest cut on the comp). Tackhead, Cab Volt, Skinny Puppy, and the Anti-Group are among those also represented. But if you're looking for anything akin to human passion, forget it.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Magnetic Monster (cassette)
(Hypertonia)

Eighteen tracks here, but only a few standouts. Most of the material contianed on this compilation is fairly mediocre, bland guitar pop, from groups like Mata Rata, TV Personalities, the Prayers, Eden, and others. A few tracks have a bit more personality, like a pseudo-rap/rock tune from Sosumi; vaguely techno-dance from Walter Ubricht Experience; a decent rock track by the Swamp Babies; and a song by T. Wayne Wilson that sounds so much like Stan Ridgway that I had to check the track listing. Unfortunately, none of the tracks stayed with me for long. It was kind of like listening to your usual college radio show: I heard a bunch of stuff, but I couldn't remember any of it when it was over. --Mason Jones

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Money Is Not The Answer (CD)
(Beggars Banquet)

Flows pretty well, as compilations go, but there's not a lot of exciting stuff here. G.W. McLennan is the prime offender, with two emotionless cuts, but the Dylans throw in a noticeably drab jangler as well. The Darkside don't seem any too happy to be making music at all, but their instrumental, "Guitar Voodoo," is pretty good, as is a breezy Daniel Ash cut. Buffalo Tom's "Enemy" is the disc's best song, even threatening to breath some life into the album. Robert Forster distinguishes himself, particularly lyrically, and there's an interesting, albeit grating Carnival Art number. The Charlatans U.K. have two contributions, which need no description; they sound about as you'd expect. Sixty-five minutes long, this is, and in parts it sure felt it. --Richards

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Music To Be Murdered By (CD)
(Bruits Blancs)

Meaning "white noise," Bruits Blancs is a joint label created by three experimental/industrial indies out of Nancy, France, and this comp serves as a fine introduction to what they're about. My favorite of the 14 previously unreleased tracks are Geins't Nait's "Trailles" (dark layers of overlapping rhythms which almost drown out the chant-like vocals), Nox's "Hate Song" (clanking percussion, withered vocals, and Dustdevils-style guitar dissonance), and Jaggernaut's "Dirty Strip" (robotic Schwarzenegger vocals over funky rhythms), but there's much more variety to choose from. NLC blend delicate piano with industrial abrasion; Hanzel & Gretzel segue voice and percussion collage into despairing violin phrasings; Laurent Petitgand contributes a lush, orchestral track; and 60 Etages give us some spazzed-out jazz-rock. Music To Be Murdered by is a thoughtful project, with a nice CD booklet, to boot.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
New York Eye & Ear Control (CD)
(Matador)

It's hard to describe most of these bands without using

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the word "noise," but such is the case with much of the music of New York City. Though Owt, Biggest Square Thing, and Royal Trux have sounded a lot more inspired elsewhere, this album is a pretty good intro to a dozen NYC bands. Personal favorites here are tracks by Dustdevils (who add nuance to ominous guitars and drum pounding, and to the mysterious and seductive vocals of guitarist/singer Jaqi), Timber (who, by virtue of their lineage, blend the jitteriness of Better Than Death and Fish & Roses with the soothing pop of Let's Active), and Unsane (who belt out the most brutal and beautiful rock stuff anywhere). For those who like things particularly harsh, there's the piercing atonal squall of Borbetomagus' saxophones, Circle X's bewildering, disembodied noise-meets-the Indy 500, and Rudolph Grey's slow, crumpled guitar noise. NYE&EC is nowhere near perfection, but it's recommended for those too timid to plunge into the scene head first.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Rock City Productions #2 (cassette)
(Rock City)

Rock City is easily the most mainstream tape label I've run into. While I don't intend that as an insult, I'm not sure I see the point in wanting to be a major label junior. But at least, most of the dozen bands head-type guy Jeff Snow has come up with are capable of one decent song. Material here ranges from the Three O'Clock-like pop of Outcast and the peppy 1980-style power pop of No Radio to the death metal of Black Rose Of Death and the jazz/metal virtuosity of guitarist Mike Hersch. My favorite tune, however, is Unchained's "Locked Out"—melodic rock with a downright catchy guitar riff. The instrumental break's kind of needless, but this could almost be a hit.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Teriyaki Asthma Volume V (7" EP)
(C/Z)

Loud guitar rock is the signature style of C/Z, and all four cuts on this 7" blast away pretty decently. Jonestown's "Fuck Your High And Get You Up" has the punch of a well-oiled, Midwestern, Effigies/Naked Raygun-type of machine; Gas-Huffer (with Tom Price, ex of the U-Men) take a garagier approach on "Hijacked"; Porn Orchard do it slower, lacing "What Kills" with a metallic flavor; and Daddy Hate Box funk things up on "Look Like Hell." No out and out killers here, but a fair job is turned in by all concerned.

Intro cont. from p. 3

Boston. We had a poster of its skyline on our wall to remind us it was our goal. And then, ironically, there we were, together, walking the streets of that fair city. I had moved back just that week; she just happened to be up on business and had skipped out for the afternoon. So we strolled aimlessly, arms around each other, clinging for dear life because we knew we were losing each other. It was warm and sunny as we window-shopped, hand in hand. We stopped for ice cream, she, in her playful way, smearing hers across my face and glasses, laughing. But the bright blue sky didn't change the fact that she had betrayed me by not joining me in my move, and I had in turn abandoned her for an uncertain future. And after she'd left, a few days later, I walked those same streets without her. Alone, but haunted by her presence. Boston, a place where we would never be together, a place that never again would be "home."

*****

Postscript, and another true story: I was just putting the finishing touches on the above intro, when the phone rang. "I was just thinking about you," she said. "Our old stomping grounds, the convention..." It was indeed her. Calling from Boston, of all places. Any of you who think **File 13** is about suicide just hasn't been reading that carefully...

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One Twenty Twelve cont. from p. 19

Hey, I wonder is it's what they meant, considering the band hails from the U.K., but **808 State**'s "Lift" (Tommy Boy) takes what's essentially elevator music and punches it up with some ambient house beats. Not as energetic as "Cubik" or as compelling as "Ooops," but it's good music to just kind of float around the room to.

Quadrophonia's signature tune, "Quadrophonia" (RCA) is some driving, high-voltage techno-house that's guaranteed to get your pulse pounding. Also from Holland, Quadrophonia take up where D-Shake left off, adding an evil-sounding rap and some calm synth lines to allow a few moments of respite. Quite hot.

cont. on p. 53

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cont. on p. 53

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'Zines cont. from p. 20

Gwar, and Throbbing Gristle. ($2, Box 1128, Norristown, PA 19404)

Taladro #3--Small Xeroxed 'zine out of Mexico that leads me to believe they don't have very good photocopiers south of the border. Antonio seems to gravitate towards bands like Ministry, Skinny Puppy, and Lard, judging by the reviews, while longer features include Controlled Bleeding, Buckle Mutants, Faith No More, and Mexican hardcore band Puro Pinche Ruido. There's also stuff on European tape labels, jazz from Russia, and an essay on the state of heavy metal. Lots of short reviews of 'zines from South America, Europe, and Mexico, and nice artwork too. One catch--it's all in Spanish. ($2, Juan Antonio Rotunno Espino, 10 Y 11 Anaya Y O. Rmz #736, Col. Victoria, Tamaulipas 87050, Mexico)

Ugly American #666--Those mean motherfucks are back, my friends. As usual the highlights are the brutal/hilarious live reviews, but also included are decent ints w/Morbid Angel and Pain Teens, and chaotic ones w/Monster Magnet and lunkheads extraordinaire Upside-Down Cross. Skullflower, too. ($4, Greg Chapman, Box 8433, Red Bank, NJ 07701)

Wiglet #3--Very odd this magazine, with a feeling that's personal, but rather detached somehow--possibly because of longterm unemployment, heartbreak, and too much television. Gilmore's narrative is simple but effective, whether describing a rather dispassionate college love affair or writing the story of Caprette, the shampoo girl. Then there's a photo tour of some rather rundown Columbus houses and a rather amusing account of a trip to Lexington, KY. ("An entire can of Sprite landed in my crotch as we pulled away, yikes. I was wearing a dress today. Note: always wear tough guy clothes on long trips.") ($1+52¢ in stamps, Gilmore Tamny, 382 Wyandotte Ave., Columbus, OH 43202)

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Steve Davis cont. from p. 16

spoke to DJ Robsquad and Celia. Sorry I was kind of abrupt...I was hot and cranky.

Next up was a week trip to L.A. I was with Michie, who was meeting the others for a Shonen Knife mini-tour. Best part was driving through Topanga and Laurel canyons. They were beautiful. L.A. itself was O.K., but the music industry people I met, from stations and labels, were shallow, arrogant dickheads. I was disgusted by them, actually.

I saw one show in L.A., Shonen Knife at the Roxy. They ruled. Missed the other bands, but two guys from Celebrity Skin came out with us to Magic Mountain, and they were nice. The Psyclone was awesome.

The remainder of my L.A. excursion was spent with my wife's folks, who came to visit. Since they speak no English, I had to pull out all of my Japanese, much of which had atrophied over the summer, due to disuse. We had fun. Went shopping on Melrose, ate hamburgers...Americana.

Back from L.A., things have been quiet. I'm writing this on Sunday, August 25. My plane to Osaka leaves tomorrow morning. Saw Mark last night.

Then, once again, I head off to Japan. The weather is beautiful, the trees are green. I can look out and see the red pine of my grandfather, and in it, he lives. As my plane flies over America tomorrow, I'll look down and wave "bye" to my friends.

I hope you all had nice summers. I hope we all have good winters. Take care, **File 13** readers.

Yo! File 13 Raps cont. from p. 18

"Rise 'N' Shine," and "Times Up" are better than the rest. Also notable is "Death Blow," another total dis of LL Cool J. I thought this feud was over, but I guess we'll know by LL's next album.

Son Of Bazerk Featuring No Self Control And The Band, Bazerk, Bazerk, Bazerk (S.O.U.L./MCA)--Energy, energy, energy! This group first caught my eye with the manic video for "Change The Style," which ranged from rap to soul to reggae to hardcore, all in under four minutes. I also enjoyed the second clip, "The Band Gets Swivey On The Wheels." Most rap vids are pretty dull, but these looked like non-stop parties, with a huge vision. I'm glad to say that the album lives up to the clips. Bazerk earns the title "Soul Brother #1," as it states on the cover. An exciting debut from an unexpected source, Bazerk is a mash of styles, mainly focusing in SOB's raps. There's some edge towards reggae ("J Dubs Theme") and R&B ("Honesty"), but it's mainly straight-ahead dance. There's a bit of seriousness on "Lifestyles Of The Blacks In The Brick," but I like this one for overall effect rather than lyrical content.

Dream Warriors, And Now The Legend Begins (4th & B'way/Island)--This album was low-key compared to most hip-hop, but don't hold that against King Lou and Capital Q. It's got a jazz feel in spots, especially on the hit, "My Definition Of A Bombastic Jazz Style," with the music largely borrowed from a Quincy Jones song, "Soul Bossa Nova." There's impenetrable lyrics galore on "Wash Your Face In My Sink," "Face In The Basin," and "Do Not Feed The Alligators" ("Do not feed the alligators/They will bite you/Do not feed the alligators/Life is a bitch"). There are nuggets of wisdom, too. From "Follow Me Not": "Who is more a fool?/The fool or the fool who follows the fool?"). It all comes together pretty well. In the end, not as exciting as some, but more interesting than most.

Next time: Cypress Hill, Leaders Of The New School, Top Choice Clique, Posse NFX, Definition Of Sound, and Downtown Science.

Don't forget to write!

Peace.

Public Bath cont. from p. 11

over our initial CD reticence, but we remain vinylphiles as collectors, and we'd both like to keep the vinyl 7"-er around for as long as possible.

F13: Please add a few words about your upcoming releases.

DP: I'm starting a 'zine this summer/fall called Show Kai, to offer a third level where bands can get their names and music more widely known. The first issue will come with two cassettes, the first a live split with Omoide Hatoba and Folk Tales (probably). The second will be new faces, with three Kyoto bands, Soap-Jo Henshi (Strange Death Of The Soapland Attendant), Dub Squad (new noise unit from Chu of Omoide), Daihakase (The Great Professor, a noise/folk/Buddhist chant/etc. band), and, from Fukioka, the Goonzies, an alternative rock band.

We'll have articles and interviews about these bands, poster art by M. Ohno, designer extraordinaire, a short comic by Eye Yamatsuka (I think), free ads for Japanese indie labels, toys, and shit. Boredoms interview, Sekiri photos and interview. That's about all.

Show Kai is a pun. As written, it means "show club," but the pronunciation is the same as "introduction." We plan to make about 1000, with about a third coming back to Japan. I'll do most of the work, so I think semi-annually is about the best I can do.

All music will be live or demo-quality only. No polish allowed.

Public Bath will try to carry all the releases advertised in the 'zine, so it might really be considered an elaborate catalog, in a way. We'll try to keep it cheap.

F13: Anything else you'd like to add?

BB: What I like most about being the label's manager is what I have named the exchange of COOL STUFF. Dave and I both like hearing from and meeting fans of these Osaka bands, in both Japan and Western countries. And whenever we're in touch with these people, COOL STUFF seems to be involved. I consider COOL STUFF to be not just material goods, but also information, great letters, etc. My Public Bath steady customers/pen pals send me discs if they happen to be in bands, recommend new music that they've been listening to, pass along goodies like goofy flyers, band posters and stickers, even baseball cards. Dave and I search Japan for equally cool goodies to send to people.

I guess that the exchange of COOL STUFF is related to a sort of shared starving artist mentality. Esentially, it is a way of thanking our customers who don't have much cash to spare for buying our releases and the Japanese collectors' discs that we also sell. Our customers thank us for releasing things be these Japanese bands, for looking for discs on their want lists while across the Pacific, for taking the time to write them instead of just shipping out discs in an exclusively commercial way—for doing something as masochistic as running a small label! This is what makes the indie network so much fun and the scummy people in the music biz easier to forget about.

Send all cards, letters, and COOL STUFF to: Public Bath, Box 2134, Madison, WI 53701.

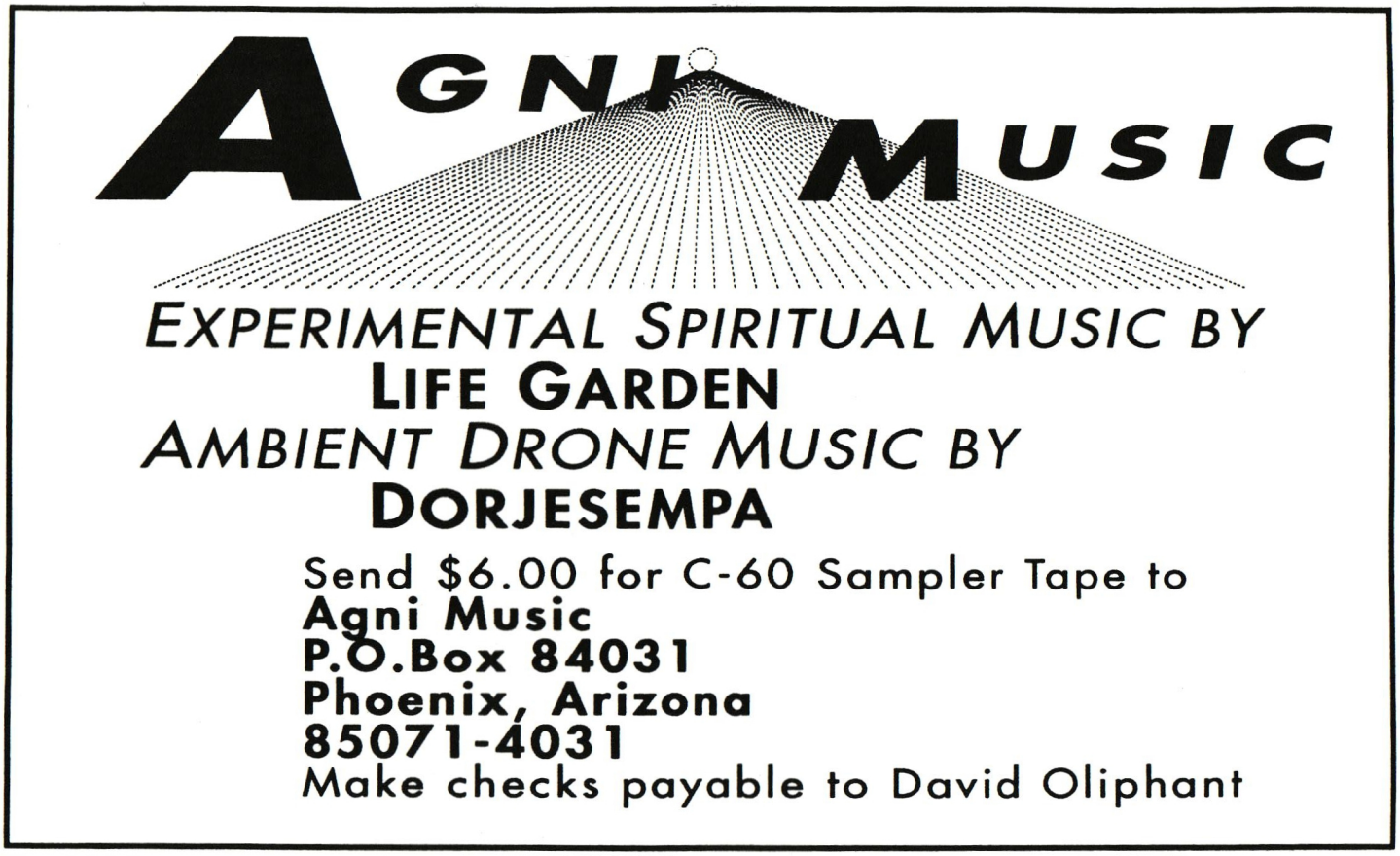
Shit Happens cont. from p. 16

mound of musical cotton-candy. The casual music listener doesn't stand a chance of discovering the most vital artists, except by chance.

Industrial music never gained a wide enough audience to interest the major labels. Punk music did to some extent, but it was already beginning to fade on its own. But when rap came along, it somehow ignited a spark, and the result can be seen every day on MTV.

I'm just wondering where this is leading. The music industry has become frighteningly adept at measuring the prevailing winds and jumping on new trends. I think that rap has been muzzled too quickly by major label mediocrity and that the next honest form of musical expression may be swallowed so quickly the casual music buyer won't ever know that it existed outside the conglomerates' vision of listener-friendly sheen.

Hopefully, I'm just being more cynical than usual.



Die, Blofeld! Die! cont. from p. 13

out of that relationship with any friends left at all. It certainly wasn't because I ever placed them ahead of her. Ever.

The memory I can barely handle is the one of the park. Things had been going rather poorly between us, but an honest conversation and intimate semi-reconciliation one evening convinced us that getting away together would have been fun. Camping in Maine for a weekend. That was the plan, and it seemed a good one. I was skeptical about it really coming off, but the day drew nearer, and I even noticed it marked on her calendar. I began to hope, with something near to happiness, that it would work out.

Nelson Mandela, whom I now hold an utterly unreasonable hatred for, was to appear in Boston that weekend. As one of her passions centered around Africa, when I heard about his visit, I began to worry. She told me, in fact, on Wednesday, that some friends of hers were going, and she thought she might want to go. But she wasn't sure, she said. Optimistic, I assured her that I would understand either way. I guess I thought that us getting back on better better terms was as important to her as it was to me.

Friday morning came, and I didn't yet have an answer. I went down to see her at work in the afternoon, and she greeted me cheerily enough. She'd be off in a little while; would I meet her in the park? Sure, I said.

I killed some time apprehensively, then headed for our rendezvous. If only, if only, I hadn't seen, and stopped to talk to, a mutual friend.

She spotted us and came over, and while we sat and talked for the next miserable, horrible half hour, all I could think about was getting rid of him, so she and I could talk. But, no. The three of us got ice cream together, and talked awkwardly about nothing. Meanwhile, my frustration at being so near her and unable to really talk slowly gnawed at me.

Finally, my patience thinning, I managed to break things up, probably impolitely. As we stood to leave, our friend said, "Hey, we're having a yard sale tomorrow. I hope you can make it."

She turned as we walked away, and said, "Oh, I can't. I'm going to Boston this weekend."

My throat tightened, and I felt a momentary rush of adrenaline as hew words hit me, and I'm sure she knew what I would say before I said it. After a few yards, in disbelief, I managed, "We're not going camping together?"

And she said, abruptly, no, she wanted to go to Boston.

And I actually did--just so when you see it happen in films or books, you'll know it does happen--repeat myself thickly, as though I hadn't heard her. "We're not going camping together?"

And she said, with some exasperation, my best friend, the woman I loved: "I don't want to go camping with you."

Whatever we said to each other after that didn't matter, because it was then that everything really collapsed. It wasn't loud, or violent, or anything of the sort, and if my friend was watching our backs as we left the park, he probably didn't even notice that anything was wrong.

How quickly I forgot the pain then. Forgot! Submerged the pain. But now it had fought its way back to the surface, and it struggled with me. We were doing a bit of a dance with each other, stumbling around, and if I managed to force it down, it pulled me under with it. It wasn't the sort of pain you could easily exhaust.

But when I wasn't beating myself about the head and neck or embellishing my sorrow into a figure of literary proportions, I was planning to kill her.

Remember? The deeper I got into my miserable love for her, the more capable I felt of the act. Such is the paradox which must haunt suicides and murderers the world over. The more you care, the more you <u>feel</u>, the less unfathomable becomes an otherwise hateful act. If I truly madly deeply love something, and all the fates smile and look away, how can I view murder or suicide to be an insane act? Isn't living in docile acceptance of an awful truth insanity? Are death or murder any more gruesome than living a lie?

Having selected murder over death, since it seemed so much more romantic, and I'm a romantic kind of guy, I was still left with the How of it.

My imagination was failing me, though, and I wasn't sure why. Was it fear? Fear of the emptiness of a life without her in it? Scary thought, best ignored.

The various episodes of telephone sparring, the waffling back and forth in my own mind, the cautious arrangements aren't worth writing about. Suffice it to say that she indicated at some point she'd like to see me and gave me the option of visiting. I took it with no reservations. The worst that could happen was intense, extreme pain... and I would delight in it. Better direct, first-hand pain, from her lips, her eyes, her body, than more of this prolonged suffering. And anyway, it would probably make killing her a bit easier.

The plane touched down somewhat roughly in Denver, but not so much as to bother me. How could anything have bothered me? I was going to see her. And when I stepped wearily, nervously off the plane, she was waiting, smiling, beautiful, exactly as I'd seen her every day for a year--it had been that long since we'd separated.

She approached me and hugged me, and it was not the moment I anticipated, where the emotion would be so great that it would take a herculean effort not to kiss each other. Instead it just felt odd, and we let go, smiled briefly, and then she took the lead as we left the airport into the reportedly different Colorado air. Didn't notice, myself.

We went back to her Mom's house, and she made us a couple of sandwiches. Pretty tasty. I was too wound up to really be hungry, but the food felt good, and while we sat there in the kitchen eating, I was able to slowly come to grips with the fact that I was there, in Colorado, in her home, with her. Everything just had that sleepy, dream-like quality to it, possibly because I was afraid to touch her for fear she'd disappear. And I wanted, terribly, to touch her. But like so many other things I'd wanted to do, I didn't. I just chewed my sandwich and listened while we talked about what we would do that afternoon.

We drove to Colorado Springs and went to the Garden Of The Gods, an incredible natural wonder of red rock formations towering high over the land. Conversation had been somewhat strained on the hour-long trip, and it was good to get outside, where we could both marvel stupidly at the beauty around us and where words were unnecessary. We spent the better part of the next hour climbing, I taking the occasional photo and making the occasional joke about death. Boy, I was cool.

It was a great day. We got to the top, and all I felt was exhilaration--nary a murderous impulse to speak of. And it would have been easy from up there. I need not have worried about being caught, because I would have grieved convincingly. I would have sobbed real tears.

Indeed, I was having such a good time that I began to think better of my plans, such as they were.

We spent that night at her family's cabin in the mountains. An amazing place, built as if by nature between two huge boulders you could step out onto from the roof. We built a fire and roasted marshmallows, playing scratchy old jazz albums on an ancient record player. In the near dark of the cozy living room, we talked seriously about nothing that I can clearly remember now, because being near her was so exciting. We talked about her family, and her, and we might have talked a little bit about us. We slept next to each other in incredibly cozy separate beds that night.

The next morning, we packed up and crawled into her little

red car again. We drove into the mountains in the area of Evergreen and Mt. Evans, and she humored me as I gaped and asked her to drive back so I could take a photo of something. We left the mountains, and I drank in the effects of various tunnels cut for the road to take through mountains of grey stone and trees.

"We used to try and hold our breath as we drove through the tunnels," she said. "Hold your breath at this next one and make a wish." I did. I made it. You know what I wished for.

That night, this time sleeping on a comfortable couch at her sister's apartment in Boulder, I had an awful dream. It was not, unfortunately, a typical awful dream, where I was losing her to someone else or being forcibly separated from her, or anything like that. No, in this dream, I was playing volleyball, surrounded by friends of mine from over the years. And at some point, we set out for a tree house, I at an apparently much slower pace than everyone else, because when I got there, everyone was inside. And I climbed up into the branches, high, high above the ground, and was probably within ten feet of the humble wooden structure when the branch I was balancing on broke.

I managed, with one hand, to grab hold of a tree limb, and there I hung, suspended in the air. I sort of half-tried to yell for help, but feared that the exertion would cause me to lose my grip. So there I hung, silently, swaying slightly, and eventually my friends, including her, gathered at the tree house window to look out at me, shock and fear plain on their faces.

The next thing I knew, I was in a living room, with all of them, and I was explaining how the accident occurred. But at some point, they could no longer hear me, and that frightening development was followed by a worse one, in which a short, pale figure appeared at my elbow and said, "Let's go."

And I looked around slowly and realized I couldn't be seen either, and as I began to ask a question, the figure, its form constantly shifting and shrinking and moving away from me, answered me sadly with a "Yes, you're dead."

I'm pretty sure that I was crying as I stood up to follow the creature, which now, inexplicably, resembled a tiny white elephant. On our journey, I was consoled by another ghost, and I also--oh, horrors!--was treated to a ringside seat at my volleyball game, my tree-climb, and the initial stages of my accident...before I was mercifully whisked away. I did escape my strange guide, and as the dream ended, I was running, back to the scene of my death, hoping beyond hope to catch a glimpse of her one last time.

It was with no small degree of trauma that I awoke. I huddled in the soft comforter, staring at the light of the moon through the cracks in the window blinds, for a good twenty minutes. I was never in danger of drifting back into slumber. Indeed, I had doubts of ever sleeping again. Finally, I stood up, pulled on some clothes, and shoved the rest of my things into my bag. I splashed some water on my face in the kitchen, which went a long way toward strengthening my resolve. It was very cold.

I crept into the bedroom where she and her sister slept together and kissed each of them on the cheek. Goodbye. Goodbye.

I was nearly at the front door when her voice from the gloom stopped me in my tracks. "What are you doing?" she asked gently. She was beautiful in a navy T-shirt and white underpants, not much more than a silhouette in the dark. I could have gone to her, wrapped my arms about her, and hugged her tightly; I'm not sure whether or not I could have killed her at that moment.

I flashed a ghastly grin. "Leaving," I said.

Crossing the floor to me, tempting the fates, her eyes were large and soft, and I finally realized I could do nothing, nothing at all. I didn't want to kill her. It would have just been one more thing she'd never forgive me for.

"I don't understand," she murmured, standing before me, very close, a trifle vulnerable--exactly as she'd always been. I wondered what dream she'd woken up from, a thought that troubled me even as I stepped out the door into the night.

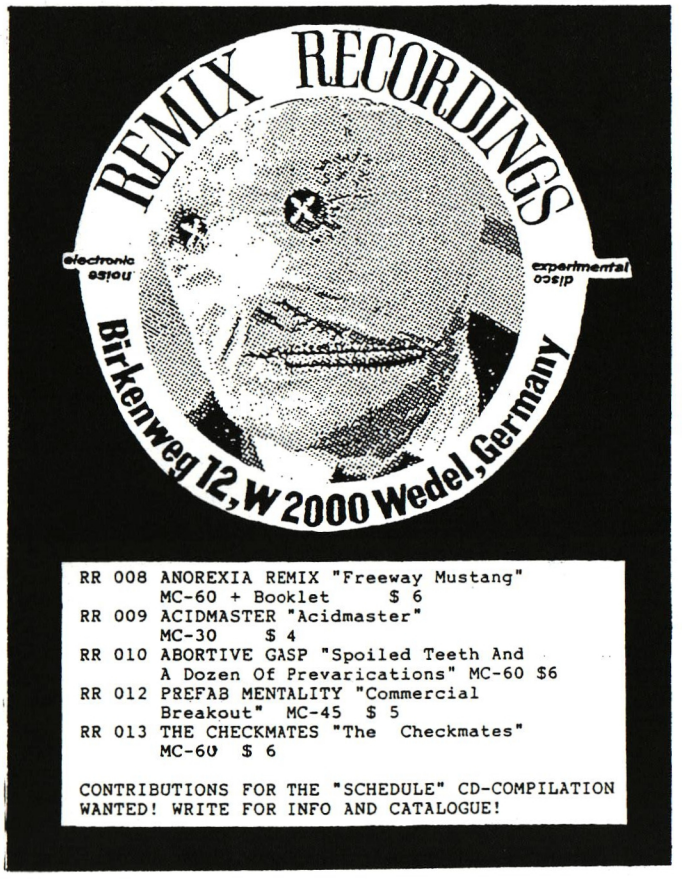
Addresses cont. from p. 49

Stanton Park, Box 58, Newton, MA 02160
Suburban Voice, Box 1605, Lynn, MA 01903
Subterranean, Box 2530, Berkeley, CA 94702
Sweet Portable Junket, 1937 Kennedy Dr., McLean, VA 22102
Sympathy For The Record Industry, 4901 Virginia Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805
Synthetic, Box 609478, Cleveland, OH 44109
Tear Ceremony, 741 St. Louis St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Tears, 1 Rue De La Croix St. Simon, Paris 75020, France
Tommy Boy, 1747 First Ave., New York, NY 10128
Touch, c/o Soleilmoon
Tulpa, Box 860, Willimantic, CT 06226
Turn Of The Century, Box 65, New Britain, CT 06050-0065
V.R. Productions, Box 36988, Phoenix, AZ 85067
Wax Trax, 1659 N. Damen Ave., Chicago, IL 60647
We Never Sleep, Box 92, Denver, CO 80201
Widemouth, Box 382, Baltimore, MD 21203
Windowpain Industries, 457 Filmore, San Francisco, CA 94117-3404
Zen Hotel, Box 4114, Pittsburgh, PA 15202

One Twenty Twelve cont. from p. 48

From the same country is **Psychick Warriors Ov Gala**, whose "Exit 23" (Kk/Cargo) is murky house dub with an ominous industrial flavor--harsh, but catchy. Both versions are somewhat minimal for their substantial length, but tribal percussion plus a high BPM make them loaded with destructo-power.

"Redhills Road" by **Candyflip** (Atlantic) is a rather lukewarm wavo song with particularly lame vocals. But the two dub versions, remixed by Justin Strauss, let you groove to some buoyant 808 State-like house.



RR 008 ANOREXIA REMIX "Freeway Mustang"
MC-60 + Booklet $ 6
RR 009 ACIDMASTER "Acidmaster"
MC-30 $ 4
RR 010 ABORTIVE GASP "Spoiled Teeth And A Dozen Of Prevarications" MC-60 $6
RR 012 PREFAB MENTALITY "Commercial Breakout" MC-45 $ 5
RR 013 THE CHECKMATES "The Checkmates"
MC-60 $ 6

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE "SCHEDULE" CD-COMPILATION WANTED! WRITE FOR INFO AND CATALOGUE!

One more comment. I thought it was interesting that you said you couldn't discuss music with women, presumably because they weren't interested in it. I, too, have this problem, but ultimately there are other things to talk about which can bring you close together. I'd trade all of the conversations I've ever had about music for one heart-to-heart with my closest girlfriend, who doesn't like much music at all.

name and address
withheld by request

Hi guy—

Thanks #10—and thanks your kind words of our Due P. show But, golly!—I didn't think we were that noisy—We were actually trying to be compositionally musical—You should hear us when we make real noise.

Best,

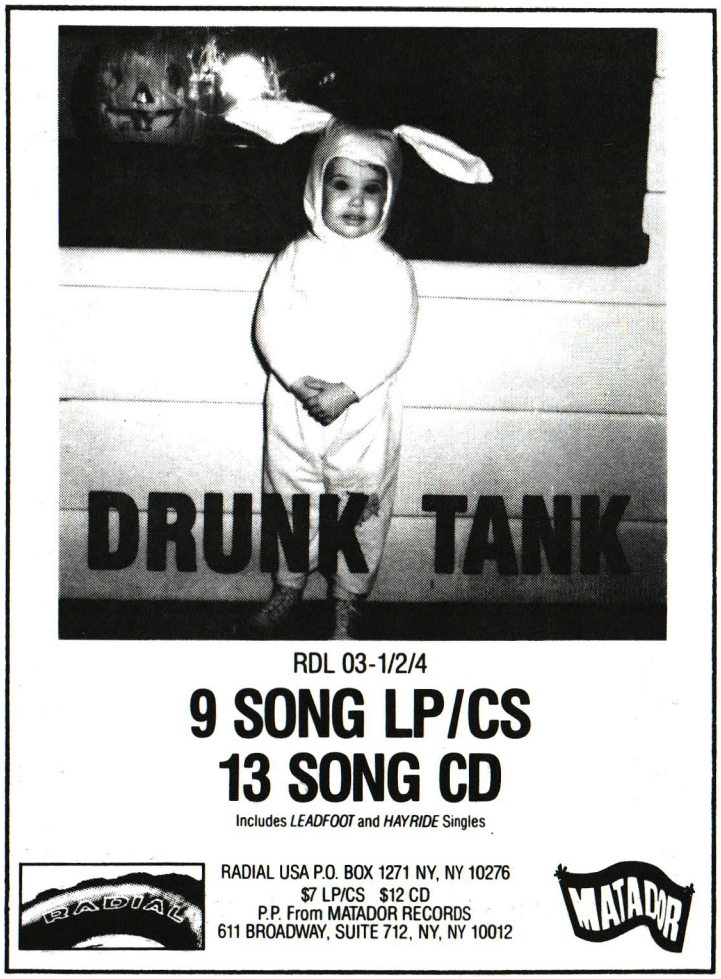
Ron Lessard
Due Process
Lowell, MA

Heil 13!!!

Thanks for the two issues! Highly enjoyed it all. (All should've played here today, but were canceled!) Mostly, I appreciate your all encompassing eclectical approach, though I'm mostly interested in industrial stuff, like MJ's stuff! Alright, so here's 11 Dallas dollars for two more iss of your all-mighty and most highly hailed non-shallow neo-zine.

Holy hallo's

Jan Walloe
Copenhagen, Denmark



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Aug. 9, 1991

Mark,

I'm in a hurry (leaving for S.F.), but I wanted to say #7 was incredible—I don't say this often. I'm referring specifically to the China article, Celia Lee's article, and your editorial. I've often thought about these topics of being Asian-American (I grew up in an Illinois suburb—no Asians), and have given stereotypes, racial slurs, bigotry, role models, and media portrayal of Asians much thought. Thank you for some intelligent insight which reaches depths that few, if any, independent magazines have touched upon.

Ken Lee
Eleven Shadows
Encino, CA

[WARNING: The remainder of this letters section contains only Chris Phinney/Debbie Jaffe/Dave Hilton letters. Those of you who do not get off on "creative" name calling are advised to stop reading here.

For those of you continuing on this next portion of our trip, let me note the following: 1) The issue of **File 13** I sent to one Blair Harper, referred to in Sabrina's letter below, was returned "ADDRESS UNKNOWN." 2) Sometime later, I received a mysterious message on my answering machine from a female caller: "This is a friend of a friend. You've been had. Debbie Jaffe is Dave Hilton." 3) My phone number is unlisted. 4) Dave Hilton paid for the ad in question with a money order, not a personal check. 5) The phone company has no listing for a Dave Hilton is San Francisco. 6) Mr. Hilton's handwriting does not match that of Ms. Jaffe's. You figure it out.

I do find it vaguely amusing that so much ado could be made over someone who might not even exist. And who would go through the trouble (and the $25) to pull such a hoax? Finally, since the following letters have degenerated to the point where they do not address music, or the music scene, at all, I hereby pull the plug on this discussion... —ed.]

Hello Mark,

First off, many thanks for your concern and kind words on the birth of our son. He is doing much better now, thank you. Also, thanx for the newest issue of **File 13**, a very good one, indeed. Thanks for the reviews also, more tapes sent to you fairly soon. Boy, the letters section has improved my sales here at HR. Especially the paid advertisement, some funny stuff, and the orders keep rolling in from it. Nice when someone else pays for your ad and it does better than the ones you pay for yourself. Hope you get another one, as I'm sure it helps you also.

Laughing all the way to the bank,

Chris Phinney
Harsh Reality
Memphis, TN

Mark,

Hey, what's up, besides Dave Hilton's cock—is he has one—you talk about hick mentality! He makes Chris Phinney look like a church mouse! With people like Dave, no wonder Californians get a bad rep. No offense to anyone, HA. Who the hell is Dave Hilton, anyway? If there even is such a person! From what I've seen in the last three issues, Chris Phinney and Mitch Rushton are the only ones that have any idea of what the scene is about! Just the sheer fact that Dave thinks Tennessee is the KKK capital proves my point. That's like saying everyone in S.F. is gay! Which we're well aware isn't true! I'm a female, but at least I can read, which Annalisa & Blair must not be able to do, since Chris clearly states he's not anti-female, only anti-twat flopping! They sound like bitches to me! Are they giving up their day jobs to insult peo-

ple? Sounds like it! I guess their daddy abused them when they were tots, since they come across as male bashing to hop on the band wagon! Anyone that would pay to sound like a redneck must be a California transplant!! Or they just wanted to let the whole world know Chris can get them where they live by writing to you!

By the way, if they know how to get to the Big Easy, we'll be glad to show 'em where the gators live! Here's hoping you get another paid ad!

Not contradicting myself,

Sabrina Deaxuxab
New Orleans, LA

P.S. Catch ya next time! Great letter section!

August 30, 1991

Dear Editor:

I've been getting my last few issues of **File 13** from Tower Records' in-store newsstand, which tells me I'm not the only avid readers of your publication. Seems to sell out almost as fast as the Quayle Quarterly. Compliments to the Tower folks to have the good sense to offer something other than Spin, Rolling Stone, and Option. Anyway, it's good to see something worthwhile picking up momentum, although I am sorry to see the "Letters To The Editor" Tag Team Match seems to get you down so. Just think, you've made it to record store distribution to some degree, so until the American Home Family Clearinghouse invites you to join their mailers, you've got the next best thing to Ed McMahon promising millions: the Doctor Hannible Lector of letters, Dave Hilton.

I've lost track of which court the ball is in this issue. No matter. My interest in this Phinney vs. Jaffe thing is purely a sporting one. True, the romantic in me likes to think it's a simple case of boy-meets-girl, boy doesn't "get any" from girl, boy writes girl's name on men's room walls. But my office pool has stuck me holding the "baby-bayonetter barbequed his kid in a Satanic cookout" chance card. But seriously, it's Dave Hilton and his gut/monkey-wrenching parodies of the sub-minimal chic set that's inspired me to try my hand at putting poison pen to paper. For Christsakes, give that guy a column. That little Andy Rooney spot on the back is perfect. You could be the only editor with a contributor that pays you to run his editorials. That beats the hell out of other 'zines with AWB recording artists ads any day.

A lot like Dave Hilton's commentaries beat the hell out of most Black and Decker melodies coming down the pike. Although he should set his sights higher. I mean, there are those of us who kick our dog and tell fag jokes every now and then, but that happens from all areas of the country, from the land of hog reports to that of surf reports, from sea to shining sea. Any Heyduker that's graduated from "Twist And Burn 101" knows there exists a proportional ratio between one's target prominence and the degree of harrassment the before-mentioned target could have inflicted on others. In my book, Mr. Hilton has "touched upon" individuals that rate a low annoyance factor, I'd gauge somewhere between static cling and Virginia Graham. Even though he's only shoving bile back down (or up) where it came from, I find his overkill leaves the poor bastard looking like a clubbed bloody Newfoundland harp seal pup spread eagled on a slab of ice (how's that for a Hilton-like analogy?). Even the biggest bully on the beach can have the sympathetic quality of a dumb animal.

A more challenging antagonist might be better. Someone the whole readership can sink their teeth into. How about feeding him Steve Albini? Open wide, Dave!

Jeff B. Beadie

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